ADVENTURES OF THE FIRST AMERICANS

INDIAN Stories

FALL

20¢

A.N.C.

TRADE MARK REG.

Blood calls to blood . . . The paleface Indian brave coveted the forbidden Conestoga girl—

DEATH FOR THE WHITE SIOUX!

An Arrow-Swift Novelet

by ANSON SLAUGHTER

The "Red Savage" who routed the U. S. Cavalry

NEZ-PERCE NAPOLEON

by ROBT. R. RICHARDS

When War-Bow and Scalp-Knife raked the Plains . . .

RED ARROW AMBUSH

A Galloping Novel

by W. V. ATHANAS

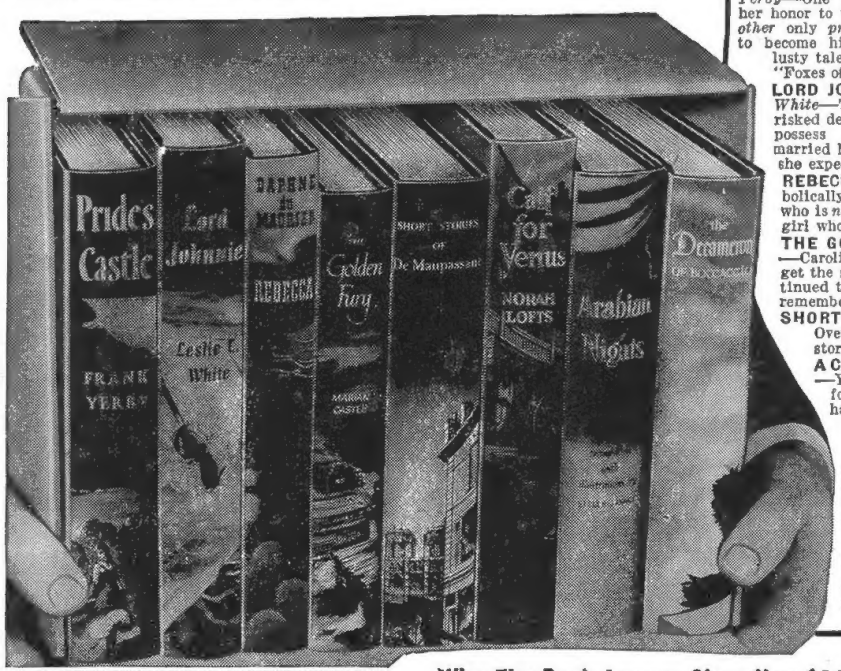
Anderson

NOT ONE! NOT TWO! NOT FOUR! NOT SIX! *but*

EIGHT FREE!

ON THIS AMAZING OFFER

YES—we want to give you, AT ONCE *all 8* of these best-read books FREE, to *prove* how much pleasure you'll get as a member of "America's Biggest Bargain Book Club"! Ordinarily Book League members get their Bonus Books at the rate of one FREE with every two Club Selections (or alternates) purchased. But, on this offer, you not only get ALL 6 Bonus Books—you *also* get *2 more* best sellers *free*, as your membership gift!



THOUSANDS HAVE PAID $18 FOR THESE 8 BOOKS—

But YOU Get Them FREE

If you join the Book League Now!

PRIDE'S CASTLE, *by Frank Yerby*—One woman sacrificed her honor to win his love; the *other* only *pretended* goodness to become his wife! Daring, lusty tale by the author of "Foxes of Harrow."

LORD JOHNNIE, *by L. T. White*—This dashing rogue risked death and torture to possess the woman who married him ONLY because she expected him to die! Could she resist this bold gambler?—*Pride's Castle.*

REBECCA, *by Daphne duMaurier*—Diabolically clever tale of a strange woman who is *never seen*—told by an even stranger girl who is *never named!*

THE GOLDEN FURY, *by Marian Castle*—Caroline Lawlor tried desperately to forget the scarlet secret of her past—yet continued to love the *one man* who made her remember it!

SHORT STORIES OF De MAUPASSANT Over 500 of the most daring, frankest stories of their kind ever written!

A CALF FOR VENUS, *by Norah Lofts*—Young, innocent Letty was headed for a fate worse than death—but the handsome young doctor risked his career to save her!

Rachel avenged France because of one kiss too many! —*Maupassant.*

ARABIAN NIGHTS—The fabulous "1001" tales of adventure, magic and romance that have captivated millions of readers.

The **DECAMERON,** *by Boccaccio*—Famous tales of sinning "saints" and saintly "sinners."

MAIL WITHOUT MONEY TO

BOOK LEAGUE OF AMERICA
Dept. FHQ 8, Garden City, N. Y.

Please send me at once—FREE—all eight of the books described on this page (worth $18 in publishers' editions) and enroll me as a member. You may start my subscription with the current selection.

The best-selling book I choose each month may be either the regular Selection or any other popular book described in Club's monthly "Review." I am to pay only $1.49 (plus a few cents shipping charges) for each monthly book sent to me. I may cancel my subscription at any time after buying twelve books. There are no dues for me to pay; no further cost or obligation.

Mr. / Mrs. / Miss. _____
Please print plainly

Address _____

City _____ Zone No. (if any) ____ State ____

Slightly higher in Canada
Address: 105 Bond St., Toronto 2

Why The Book League Gives You $18 Worth of Books FREE

YOU never pay any dues or club fees as a Book League member. And every month you receive the current Selection, or an alternate, at the Club's low price.

You get a popular best-seller by an author like Steinbeck, Maugham, or Hemingway—a book selling, in the publisher's edition for as much as $3.00 or more. But YOU get *your* copy at the special low members' price of only $1.49, plus few cents shipping charges.

You Get 8 FREE Books RIGHT AWAY

On this special offer, you don't have to wait a year to assemble the Bonus Books which members receive with every 2 Club Selections (or alternates) purchased—you may have SIX of them right away, in advance! AND—*in addition*—you get, in the same big package, TWO MORE FREE BOOKS as your membership gift from the Club! Eight free books in all, yet the only requirement is that members accept twelve of the Club's book bargains during membership.

No Need to Take Every REGULAR Selection

The books you receive need NOT be the Club's regular Selections. Each month you get without extra charge, the Club's "Review," which describes *other* best-sellers; so that, if you prefer one of these to the *regular* Selection, choose it instead. No dues; no further cost or obligation.

Send No Money—*Just Mail Coupon Now!*

Mail coupon today—without money—and receive your BIG membership gift package containing the EIGHT books described above. You also receive, as your first Selection, the current best-selling novel now being distributed to members. Enjoy these nine books—eight FREE, and the ninth at the Club's bargain price.

Then you will understand why this IS "America's Biggest Bargain Book Club"! Mail coupon—without money—now.

BOOK LEAGUE OF AMERICA
Dept. FHQ 8, Garden City, N. Y.

ADVENTURES OF THE FIRST AMERICANS

INDIAN Stories

T. T. SCOTT, *President*
MALCOLM REISS, *General Manager*
JACK O'SULLIVAN, *Editor*

Two Roaring Redskin Novels

RED ARROW AMBUSH . . . . . ***W. V. Athanas*** 2
The Redman's patience was at an end. A huge nation of freedom-loving people were moving their strength to the land of the Little Big Horn . . . where war-bow and scalp-knife, and the White man's Long-gun were poised to rake the plains.

COMANCHE THUNDER . . . . . ***Bart Cassidy*** 31
Raised to be a Comanche brave by the painted killers of his pioneer family, young Jimmy Gallant felt the call of his heritage through a white girl's captive plea . . . and switched the Redskin medicine.

Indian Stories' Special Features

CATFISH JOHN, THE GENTLE SIOUX KILLER . . ***Edmund Niles*** 27
The Editor takes pleasure in publishing this unusual reminiscence told by one of the early pioneers to his son. It is the story of one of the Old West's all too infrequent friendships between Red Man and White—a friendship ended only by the great Sioux massacre.

THE NEZ PERCE NAPOLEON — CHIEF JOSEPH . ***Robt. R. Richards*** 65
Bred to the ways of peace was Chief Joseph. But harsh government orders rankled . . . and when this brilliant Nez Perce chieftain finally changed his colors he became the deadliest, most cunning foe the U. S. Cavalry ever was called on to subdue.

Two Action-Packed Short Stories

BRAND OF THE RED WARRIOR . . . . . ***Ike Boone*** 72
Many scalps once dangled from Cheyenne coup-sticks. But now Two Bears' people were beset by sickness. They were tired and hungry . . . and even Two Bears himself, once the proudest of warriors, felt his courage wavering at the swift-charging advance of the Long-Knives.

DEATH TO THE WHITE SIOUX! . . . . . ***Anson Slaughter*** 84
He was a Dog Soldier; a young brave with a glorious future among the dauntless Sioux . . . 'til foolishly, he let the shadow of the wagon train white girl cool his warrior blood.

THIS IS A FICTION HOUSE MAGAZINE

FALL ISSUE, 1950 **20¢ a copy**
Volume 1, Number 2 **80¢ per year**

Indian Stories Magazine: Published quarterly by WINGS PUBLISHING CO., INC., 130 West 42 St., New York 18, N. Y. The entire contents of this magazine are copyrighted, 1950, by Wings Publishing Co., Inc., All rights reserved. For advertising rates address: ADVERTISING DIRECTOR, Fiction House, Inc., 130 West 42 St., New York, 18, N. Y.

RED ARROW AMBUSH

BY W.V. ATHANAS

The Redman's patience was at an end. A nation of freedom-loving people were massing their strength at the land of the Little Big Horn . . . and war-bow and scalp-knife, and the White man's long-gun were poised to rake the plains.

HE MADE HIS first buffalo kill when he was just twelve summers. The hunting party rode out while the sun was still half hidden in the east. Long Sleeper was not invited. He went anyway. He had a small bow, not strong enough for what he wanted, so he pestered his uncle until he got the loan of a heavier one. He had three hunting arrows, one of them very crooked, but with a good head, and he caught his pony and rode out half a mile behind the hunters.

At the last moment, he remembered he had not painted his face, nor made medicine, and he dismounted at a little creek and found a bit of red clay, which he mixed to a creamy consistency with water. He made a double streak along the sides of his jaw, another down each cheek. He remounted, and tried to make a song as he rode, pleading with Wakan Tanka to give him good hunting. It wasn't a very good song, but he hadn't had much practice at making songs. It ran; *Father above, hear me. I want to kill a buffalo, but I am not yet a man. Make my arm strong for this hunt.*

Maybe it was a good song after all. The hunters found buffalo before midmorning. Long Sleeper had not tried to catch up to them, but the hunters had been aware of him ever since they had left the camp. Now they waited, behind a little rise, watching him, until he had come up.

The younger hunters went through the

pantomime of hilarious laughter, without making a sound, making great slapping gestures at their thighs, tipping their heads back with mouths gaping wide. The older men simply looked at him. Long Sleeper suddenly wished he was back herding the horses with the other boys. Particularly did he wish it when his father spoke.

"What are you doing here?" His father's face showed nothing.

"I come to hunt buffalo."

One of the older hunters, a man ripe with honors, said gravely, "This one should have stayed behind for if the buffalo see him, they will surely all die of fright at sight of so great a hunter, and much meat will be wasted. Let us go back and bring more horses to pack the meat while this one makes the slaughter."

Then Long Sleeper knew they were all laughing at him, and his pride shriveled up and sank in his stomach like a stone. He wheeled his pony without a word and started to ride out. Instantly his father rode to head him off.

There was just the faintest hint of a smile on his father's face as he said half-gently, half-roughly, "Come on, then, since you have come this far. Have a try at the hunting. Perhaps if you are courageous and eat much meat, you will be a man before your mother."

He wheeled his pony, and Long Sleeper followed, the silent laughter of the young hunters pricking him like sharp needles, but that went away in the thrill that came as they topped the rise and saw the buffalo.

There were perhaps a hundred of the huge beasts in the little swale, immense shaggy bulls, sleek fat cows, a few calves still awkward on their spindly legs.

Owl, the older hunter, barked a harsh, "Hopo! Hopo!" and then everything was forgotten in the wild rush down the gentle slope into the herd.

As they came into the choking dust of the run one of the bulls wheeled suddenly, thrust his curly poll almost to the ground, and charged the ponies. The riders swerved with practiced ease, and Owl leaned down to rap the old bull across the nose with his bow with disdainful skill.

But Long Sleeper was green, and so was his pony. The bull swung out of the dust cloud, loomed up with incredible size, and his huge head, fit to fill half a tipi, hooked vicious, arm-long horns from side to side as his head swung. Long Sleeper frantically swung his quirt. The pony leaped and sidled, and Long Sleeper felt the brush of shaggy mane against his shrinking thigh as the bull shot past.

Another form loomed up in the dust pall, and he swung the pony hard to avoid it. But it was a cow, two arrows standing stiffly from her heaving side, legs braced and head down, dying on her feet. Then it was that Long Sleeper realized that he was being left behind the hunt. He drove the pony hard, lashing with his quirt, drumming his moccasined heels on its ribs, and he clutched the bow and his three arrows in a sweating hand.

He rode past Owl, already dismounted and with his pony tethered to a horn of a downed cow, calmly getting out his skinning knife. He waved cheerfully to Long Sleeper, and turned back to his work.

The pony swerved to avoid another downed animal, and then, while he was still off balance, Long Sleeper caught sight of a chunky yearling bull, traveling in great bucking leaps. Long Sleeper frantically snatched an arrow, fumbled it, almost dropped it, finally got it nocked, and snapped the shaft away. The pull of the bow was too strong, and he did not get it completely drawn, so that the arrow did not go deeply into the young bull's side. Long Sleeper babbled prayerfully, threw his full weight into drawing the stiff heavy bow, and drove off his second arrow.

Too high. It went into the base of the hump that was just beginning to form on the yearling. The last arrow. The crooked one. It curved in its flight, went no more than a hands width into the ribs of the bull, who drove madly on, no more bothered by the shafts than if they were stinging insects.

A great bubble of outrage and frustration boiled up in Long Sleeper's chest. He squalled aloud, drove the shying pony alongside the bull, and got hold of that accursed crooked arrow. He put a vicious thrust on it, drove it deeper, and the pony lurched away. Frantically now, Long

Sleeper yanked the pony over until his leg was squeezed between the two racing animals, thrust and shoved and thrust on the shaft of the arrow, feeling for the deep-seated life within the yearling bull. There was no room for fear or caution. Blood lust was on him, and if the pony had faltered in that instant he would have tackled the bull afoot.

FORTUNATELY, the pony did not falter. The arrow went deeper, almost to the feathers, and Long Sleeper, sobbing excited breath deep into his chest, lunged again, with his full weight, felt the tough shaft snap, and then the bull humped his spine, took three plunging, slowing, leaps, and braced his forelegs. Blood streamed from his mouth, he made a strangled sound, and then his legs buckled, and he toppled.

The pony had charged past, as the bull slowed, and Long Sleeper reined him around, and came back. He swung down, and then the tension caught up with him, and he sat down suddenly? because his legs would not hold him up a moment longer. But the thought was hot as fire in his exulting mind; *I have killed my buffalo! I am Long Sleeper, and I have made my kill; and a good bull too, not a scrawny calf!* But his legs had not the strength to hold him up, and he sat, staring at his bull, the magnificent, enormous, fine, fat, wonderful bull which he alone, only twelve summers old, had killed!

Then he heard the drumming of hooves, and his father brought his pony to sliding halt and swung down, his broad, heavy-boned face tight with concern.

"Are you hurt, my son?" he cried.

Long Sleeper cried back in outraged pride, "No, of course not! I have killed a bull, my father!"

The concern slid off his father's face. A sudden grin came and went, and then he clapped a hard hand on his son's shoulder. "Hau! Mighty Hunter!" he cried mockingly, but with real pride behind the mockery, "You kill a little calf, and cannot walk! Come, take your knife, and butcher your meat, before the blackbirds come to take it from you."

But he put a hand under Long Sleeper's arm and helped him up, and got out his own long knife to help.

His mother admired the meat extravagantly, when he put the lead rope of the loaded pony in her hands. That night he gorged on fat ribs, and ate the whole heart of the brave little bull. That same night he was invited to join the Young Badger Society, and his conquest was complete.

Bear Man, his father, sat in the circle that night, while the dancing went on, and he puffed fast on his pipe and looked proudly around when Long Sleeper was presented with a wooden arrow, stained red, with the tassel of the little bull's tail tied to the shaft. Bear Man gave away a good horse and a man's weight in meat, in honor of his son. Long Sleeper killed many buffalo after that, but he never forgot that first one, for never again was that thrill repeated.

From that day he lived with the men; gave away his small bow and blunt arrows, threw away his head-band, and worked his hair into two tight braids wrapped in red cord. At sixteen, he was initiated into the Fox Society, and at seventeen, he became a man. He killed his first enemy.

IN THE BEGINNING, so the old heralds said, Wakan Tanka, The Great Spirit, made the Sacred Mountains, the ones the white men called Black Hills, and he made the buffalo. He made men, and the Sioux used no other name, for Sioux was Man. The old heralds told it, and it must be true, for the heralds had long memories, and they spoke with straight tongues.

Long ago, when the earth was all flat, when the mountains were but prairie-dog mounds, the Sioux met the Iroquois.

"Who are you?" asked the leader of the Iroquois.

"We are Sioux."

"Where do you go?"

"We hunt buffalo. And you?"

"We," said the haughty Iroquois, "hunt men."

"You have found them" said the Sioux.

The battle raged while one might smoke two long pipes. Then all the Iroquois were dead or captive. Now the punishment for an unfaithful woman is to slit her nostrils, and such a one is called Cut-Nose Woman. So the Sioux slit the noses of all the cap-

tive Iroquois, and turned them loose.

"Tell your people," said the Sioux, "not to send women to fight with men. For we are Sioux."

And so the Sioux were the Nation of Men, and their land was more than a man could see from the highest hill, further than a fast horse could travel from full moon to full moon; the Sky was their father and the Earth their mother, and the wind blew free across the seven nations of the Sioux; The Minninconjou, The Hunkpapa, The Sans-Arc, The Two Kettles, The Santee, Blackfoot, Oglala. But every warrior of the seven nations said proudly, "We are Sioux!"

II

THE CAMP on Crazy Woman Creek formed two great circles that covered half a mile, for a party of the Hunkpapa were here to hunt with the Minninconjou. The men talked, long interminable discussions of battles past, horses stolen, raids on the Crows and the Shoshoni. The buffalo were fat and plenty, and every night was a feast. Thus it was that when there were hides enough for robes and lodge skins, dried meat and pemmican stored, moccasins made, the young men grew restless.

They were excluded from the warriors' councils, for no proud coup feather stood upright at their back hair. They had no ponies painted with their battle marks, no ponies to give to the fathers of the plump young women who looked at them with their laughing liquid eyes. Any man could have a woman, but it was not a good thing to go to her father with empty hands like a begging Crow.

So the young men grew restless, Long Sleeper among them, for Blackbird, daughter of Owl, had let him throw his blanket around her while they talked. But she would go no further.

She laughed at him, and called him "Bare-headed Boy," and when he grew excited with her rounded body pressed against him by the tight folds of the blanket, she bit his hand, hard, and ran, still laughing, to her father's lodge.

So the war-party was made up; a dozen warriors, blooded long since, a couple of them warbonnet men, and some thirty young ones on this, their first war-party. Long Sleeper rode his own pony, his only one, and his father had hung his own rawhide shield across his shoulders. He rode with a young Hunkpapa, a couple of summers younger than himself, who was called Slow. Slow had only a few blunt arrows, and a boy's bow, but he was a stubborn lad, and would not go back, once the party was on its way. He took all their laughter and gibing without a word, but his stubborn young jaw thrust out stiffly as he rode. Long Sleeper did not talk to him much, but neither did he laugh, remembering the silent laughter of the young men on his first buffalo hunt.

The scouts found the Crow camp the fourth day out, rode a circle on the slope ahead to warn of a big camp, then came back. The war-party lay out half the night in a little gully, then moved in toward the camp afoot.

Claw, Long Runner, Makes Buffalo, and Woodpecker, as befitted their experience, cut out the belled lead horses. Riding these, they brought a bunch out of the herd, moving them slowly, until the eager young men could catch mounts and push them back to the draw. Then the four experts went in again, lying flat on the backs of the captured mounts, and this time they cut out a good hundred head, brought them across the long sweep of the prairie to where the rest waited. Then the Crow camp came alive.

A single yell split the night, and then another, and suddenly the lodges began to glow like huge tapered candles, as the fires inside were kicked to life. Someone fired a rifle blindly, back there, and Woodpecker sent a taunting yell back at them. Aroused Crows came boiling out of the lodges, to catch ponies and give chase. A man afoot in the prairie is a dead man, and a horse is a precious thing. The Crows would not let these go without a fight.

Woodpecker flapped a blanket, made it pop like a gun shot, and Long Runner and Claw charged at the captured horses, shrieking like twenty devils each. The horses stampeded, and a few of the young men closed in behind them to keep them moving.

Long Sleeper had caught a fine horse, a big black with a white blaze face. When Woodpecker and Long Runner fell back,

he pulled his new mount about, and went with them.

He left his heavy bow in its case. He had a lance, a slender shaft with a saw-steel tip ground sharp as a skinning knife, and this he held in his right hand while he held the shield in his left.

Then the Crows came out of the darkness, and Long Runner blazed away with his enormous old smoothbore musket. It fetched a chorus of startled yells from the Crows, and a ragged return volley. Something ripped nastily through the air past Long Sleeper's head, and an arrow slapped noisily against his tilted shield and caromed off.

There was no real fighting to be done in the darkness. So they rode as a rear-guard to the stolen horses, firing blindly behind them at the sound of the Crows, loosing an occasional arrow, but mostly taunting the Crows with brave yells and insulting songs. The Crows hung grimly on, waiting for daylight.

The first dim light of false dawn crept in without enough sharp change to be truly noticeable. It was as if a dark mist were being slowly lifted, for one caught shadowy motion, then sharper outline, and then suddenly, the Crow ponies could be identified, and the war-party could see the Crows and their weapons.

THERE WERE at least thirty of them, and many had guns. Long Runner and Woodpecker, as befitted warbonnet men, screeched bravely, and charged the Crows alone, whipping their ponies into a driving run, throwing their bodies away in the suicidal dash.

No man wanted to die in the dark. The old heralds told dismal tales of how a man wandered through the Happy Land, blind forever, unable to see the beautiful country of the gods, all because he had been killed in darkness. And even in daylight, it took a brave man to declare, "I throw away my body," and charge the enemy, alone. For a man could not in honor turn back from such a charge without striking a blow, and he must be among the enemy to do this.

So Woodpecker and Long Runner went in. Long Sleeper hesitated. The Crows were so many—and they had many guns. Then another pony swerved by him, and he saw the boy, Slow.

He carried no weapons. In his hand was a willow wand, with a tuft of fur and a single feather on the end, and the lad rode low on his little pony, yelling bravely, right on the heels of the two warbonnet men.

The Crows split in the face of the insane charge, and a few broke and ran. Woodpecker's arm rose and fell, and a Crow warrior tumbled from his seat, knocked cleanly off his horse by the whipping shaft of the lance, and Woodpecker yelled clear and high, "Onhey! Woodpecker claims this man!" Then, his charge completed, he whirled his pony and came back.

Long Runner's man dodged. The Crow dropped off the far side of his pony. He had a short-barreled musket, and as Long Runner swung his pony to come about, to strike with his lance, the Crow tipped up the muzzle of the musket and fired. Long Runner reeled back, tipped forward, and twisted his hands in his pony's mane. His lance fell, and the Crow leaped forward, snatched it up, and drove it into Long Runner's side. The Crow yelled in triumph.

Then the boy, Slow, came out of nowhere, so far as the Crow could see. The Crow dropped the fired musket, snatched up his bow, and as the arrow came level, Slow whipped him across the forearm with his willow wand. The arrow arced high in the air.

"Onhey!" shrieked the lad. His treble voice cracked, but it showed no tremor of fear.

Long Sleeper boiled inside with the lust for battle. When Slow shot past him it was the most natural thing in the world that he should give chase. He sent the big black Crow horse after the lad's pony, and as the lad counted his coup with his willow wand, as the Crow's arrow arced high and harmless, Long Sleeper thrust his lance through the Crow's neck.

He shouted, wondering mightily at the sound of his own voice, "Okihe-wakte! —I kill him second!" Thus he counted second coup, for Slow had struck first.

Bloodshed was not the first requisite of battle. A man fought for personal honor, for no higher honor could come to a man than striking his enemy in battle. A man

fought for trophies, too, but coup came first. A man fought for ponies, for what else made a man richer than many good horses? Therefore, Long Sleeper leaned out and smacked the Crow's loose pony across the rump with his lance shaft and cried, "I claim this animal!" Then a heavy blow across his shoulders knocked him forward, and he turned just in time to duck a second, killing sweep of a Crow war club.

The numbness spread down his stiffened back muscles, and he clung desperately to his lance. His hugging arm slipped on the neck of his dancing mount, and he tumbled to the earth. His father's shield rolled crazily away on its rim, like a hoop.

Slow had wheeled, and he was racing back toward the Sioux, his mission done. Yonder, a swirling knot of Crows finished off Long Runner, for his proud warbonnet was suddenly flung into the air from the struggling group.

The mounted Crow was coming in on Long Sleeper again, and he could see the Crow's streaming hair, the fierce bloodlust straining the man's face, the stone-headed war club poised for the kill. All this he saw—and the lance in his hands was heavy as a man, and his aching shoulders were like wood in their stiffness.

He fell flat and the club grazed his back. Frantically he rolled, feeling the pound of hooves as other Crows raced up to get in on the kill. He came up on hands and knees, the lance crosswise on the ground beneath him, and saw the Crow wrenching his mount savagely about to come again. He could not dodge again, for the Crow was almost upon him, and another came now from the side, screaming furiously. Long Sleeper rolled, his clawing fingers found the lance. As he came to a sitting position he thrust clumsily.

The keen steel blade caught the Crow just above the narrow strip of buckskin that held up his leggins. His mouth came open, gaping wide in a soundless yell, and then his weight snatched the lance from Long Sleeper's hands. The butt of the shaft caught in the grass, snubbed itself, and the Crow drove himself onto the blade so hard that it stood out at his back by an arm's length.

The horse charged straight over Long Sleeper. He rolled again, evaded the trampling hooves, shot out a hand in automatic gesture, and caught the pony's flowing tail.

It jerked him away, and the lance of the second Crow stabbed deep into the earth beside him. The pony's heels lashed out, Long Sleeper let go, and again he rolled, but this time he came up from hands and knees.

There was no reason, no plan in him. He was a trapped wolf, fighting with whatever came to mind, fighting with a speed and skill he would never match again. He came to his feet, hemmed in completely by the turning horses of the Crows, so many Crows in fact, that they were hard-put to find room to aim their blows. Long Sleeper was not so hampered. Anything he struck was enemy, and his fingers caught and brought up his heavy skinning knife.

He slashed at a striking arm above him, ducked under the neck of a rearing pony, saw a muscled Crow back before him, and stabbed the man under the ribs.

He felt the arrow hit him, a solid, jarring blow, and then he had the twisted rawhide cinch of the stabbed Crow's pony in one hand, and he jabbed the animal in the flank with the knife. The pony bolted.

He locked his hand in the cinch, let the pony drag him, and he yelled, a screeching animal yell. He took one more slash at a rider who loomed up through the red mist that surrounded him, and then suddenly, he was in the clear.

The bucking, charging pony snatched him off his feet. He simply could not run fast enough to keep up. He dropped the knife, snatched at the pony's mane with that hand, felt something tear, deep inside his shoulder, and then he knew very little for a long time.

III

THE TRAIN of wagons seemed scarcely to move. Indeed, there was little speed to it. Fifteen miles was a good day's travel, and the faster mule and horse teams were perforce made to travel at the gait of the oxen. It was a good-sized train, some forty wagons, of which perhaps half were sturdy Conestogas, the rest rebuilt farm wagons and a few carts. The cavayard came behind and a little to

the side, the hundred-odd horses tended by well-mounted men, the cattle by half-grown boys under the direction of an elderly graybeard. They moved without much waste motion, for this train had nearly a thousand miles under its collective belt, and they considered themselves seasoned.

They had come through a little brush with the Rees, way back, and they had met small parties of Crow and Arapaho, so now when the guide, far ahead, rode in a tight little circle, a lad rode down the line shouting "Corral! Corral!" and they went through the maneuver without much haste or excitement. Bainbridge, the train captain, sometimes thought Burd Exter, their guide, was a trifle too cautious.

Burd came back, slouching on his wiry dun pony, pulled up on a little knoll to watch the corral finished. Bainbridge flagged down a rider, took his horse, and rode out to the scout.

"What's up?"

Burd spat carefully with the wind. "Sioux," he said. "A passel of 'em."

"Think they'll tackle us?"

Again the guide spat carefully. "Never know. These is all bucks, but they ain't painted, an' they ain't tryin' to hide, so they prob'ly 're jest projeckin' around to see what's stirrin'. I'll talk with 'em."

Bainbridge grumbled, "Don't see why they keep pestering us. We're not bothering them."

Burd Exter grunted, "Well, I reckon they wonder who the tom-fools are that come draggin' crosst their country without so much as howdeedo." He looked at the train, where the drovers were funneling the stock through the gap into the interior. "Reckon they seed them horses, too. Y'see, these people think a heap of a good horse. Ain't goin' to pass none up till they've looked 'em over."

"Think they'd steal them?"

The guide spat emphatically. "Quicker'n you could say scat. Nothin' in the way of hard feelin's, you understand. They'd brag about it to your face, iff'n they met you a year later. An iff'n you'd got away with some of theirs, they'd just say the laugh was on them, an' like as not, come back that same night an' steal 'em back again. Sorta between friends, you might say."

"They'll get a bullet through the head if they try it on me."

"An' mebbe hold a scalp dance in honor of youre h'ar, iff'n you tried it, too. You jest keep yore shirt on, an' let me talk to 'em. An' keep the horses out of the way. Thataway they'll be no spilt milk to cry over."

The first of the Sioux came over a little rise, stopped there long enough to be admired, then came charging down, running their ponies in zig-zag rushes, chanting and whooping. A couple, rich in powder and lead, fired their guns into the air. The guide reached inside his shirt, pulled his pipe from its case, and raised it above his head. Out of the side of his mouth he said, "Go on back to the train, but not fast. Round up about twenty of the biggest men, on horses, and come back. Bring a big chunk of sugar and a bag o' tobaccy."

"Won't be a confounded bit of sweetening left, time we hit Oregon," grumbled Bainbridge, but he did as the guide directed.

When he came back with his mounted men, the guide was seated on the ground, and about a dozen of the Indians were seated in a semicircle facing him.

At the guide's grunted direction, Bainbridge dismounted, with about half of his men, and they ranged themselves on either side of the guide.

Burd pointed to Bainbridge with his chin and reeled off a sentence in Sioux.

"Told 'em you were the chief," he translated aside. "You're a fightin' fool, an' got four wives and fifteen, sixteen sons. When you spit in the mornin' the sun goes back down an' don't come up fer an hour. Ack like it was so." Then one of the Sioux stood up, a warbonnet man, and made a speech with much gesturing.

SAYS HE'S the scourge o' the earth. When he talks, the Crows all crawl into holes and pull blankets over their heads. Says he's stole enough ponies to mount the whole Sioux nation, with enough left over to pack meat on. His name is Bear Man, an' he kin shoot the eyeteeth out'n a stud mosquito at a hundred paces. An' that his son, Eagle Horse,

is a better man even than he is." The guide spat accurately at a crawling ant.

"That's Eagle Horse over there. That one with two straight-up feathers. Met him a few years ago. He'd just fit his way out of the whole damn' Crow nation, an' killed two of 'em on the way. Wasn't a day over seventeen at the time, nuther. Name used to be Long Sleeper, cause they couldn't hardly wake 'im when he was a baby. Sincet the battle, though, his name's Eagle Horse. Reckon he's about twenty, twenty-two, now."

The warbonnetted Sioux sat down, and the guide stood up. He spoke the same grunting language, his hands shaping the air as he talked and then, he said in English, "Break out the sugar."

He gave it to the Indians with his own hands, chopping lumps off the conical loaf with his knife as he walked the half circle. Then he moved back among the Indians who held the ponies and gave them each a piece. The Indians munched gravely.

Burd returned to his seat, and there was a period of silence while the Indians finished the sugar. Bear Man swallowed, licked his fingers, said explosively, "Waugh!"

"Good medicine," said Burd aside to the train captain.

One of the Indians brought out what looked like ragged chunks of shoe leather and passed them around to the whites.

"Ever'body take some," warned the guide. "It's jerky, dried buffalo beef, an' it'll insult 'em if you don't take it."

Then he passed around tobacco, and the formality of the meeting began to break up. The younger ones, back with the ponies, came up to admire the waggoner's horses. Bear Man carefully put his twist of tobacco away in a pouch, and stood up. He too, cast a keen eye on the horses, but did not deign to walk among them.

Suddenly, one of the waggoners said, "What's that dingus around the chief's neck?"

"Medicine," retorted the guide briefly. The man shouldered past him and stepped up to Bear Man. He put out a hand and hefted the yellow lump of metal that hung on a beaded string on Bear Man's chest.

"Strike me dead," said the waggoner reverently, "if it ain't gold!" He wheeled back on the guide. Where'd he get it?" he demanded.

"No tellin'. These people range a thousand miles forth an' back. Picked it up somm'ers."

"Suppose he'd trade it?"

"Dunno, it's his medicine. Better let it go."

The guide turned aside to speak to Eagle Horse. "How," he said. And "How," said Eagle Horse. He put out his hand, white-man-fashion, and shook hands.

"You grow tall," said Burd. in Sioux. "You are truly a man."

Eagle Horse stood proudly erect. It was true. He could now see clear over Burd's head, and Burd Exter was not a short man. Eagle Horse was over six feet tall, by the white man's measure, and wide in proportion. He wore a blanket belted around his waist, and the double puckered scar stood out on his broad coppery shoulder, where that Crow arrow had gone clear through the time he had counted his first coup.

Never would he forget that day.

IT HAD BEEN four sleeps back to the lodges of his people, the Minniconjou Sioux. Four days, during which he died many times, but always came alive again. But he did get back to the camp again with the war-party, and three days on his bed had brought him strength enough to get him to his feet.

That had been a truly proud day. Bear Man, his father, made him mount a fine pony, painted and decorated with fur tassels and eagle feathers, and had led the horse all through the camp, crying proudly, "This is my son who throws away his boy name of Long Sleeper for he has killed the Crows and won two first coups. His name is Eagle Horse, and he is my son. I give this fine horse to the poor."

And not to be outdone, the Hunkpapa contingent of the camp made a parade too, for the boy Slow. The lad's father led him on a horse through both camps, and he too gave away the valuable horse. Also he gave his own name to his son, and took another.

"From this day," he said, "this, my son, is to be Sitting Bull. I give the name, which is mine, to him. For he has struck a first coup, and he is but fourteen sum-

mers old. Hear you, now, for the name of Sitting Bull shall bring great honor to the Sioux!"

The lad sat bashfully silent on the pony, slender and young, but his square young chin was firm, and he looked around in a shy pride. His father did not live to see how great a prophet he was, but none the less, his words were to be a great prophecy.

But that had been a year for every finger of Eagle Horse's right hand. He had fought the Crows many times since, counted five coups, captured many horses. He was a man among men, who knew his prowess, so he modestly wore only one proud feather, most of the time, though sometimes he wore a second, dyed red, to show he had been wounded by the enemy, which was an honor too.

The white man's wagons were a curiosity. He knew several white men. Mountain men like Blanket Chief, the one the whites called Jim Bridger, and Hawk-Who-Sees-Far, this one who guided the wagons, and whom the wagon men called Burd Exter. But such men as Bridger and Exter were not truly white, for they thought with an Indian's mind and spoke with a straight tongue. The other men smelled of cattle, and were poor sticks that a true man could break across his knee.

Waugh! but they were many! Already, their medicine road, wheel ruts, was cut deep into the prairie, and the buffalo would not cross it. Why did not the whites stay home?

He missed his father suddenly, and looked about for him, saw a commotion behind some ponies over to the side and went that way.

IV

THE WAGGONER, GIFFORD, could not forget the gold amulet the chief wore. He knew gold, which was more than most of the whites did. And this lump was bigger than Gifford's broad thumb. He wanted it, but there was that in the chief's hawk eyes that dissuaded him from dickering for it.

He went to his own horse and got the flat bottle out of the saddle bag, and slipped it into the front of his shirt. He waited until he saw Bear Man alone, went up to him and made a gesture to follow. Screened by the ponies he fetched out the bottle, unscrewed the cap which made a cup holding perhaps an ounce, and poured it full. He smiled broadly and handed it to Bear Man.

Bear Man sniffed it, looked startled, and drank it. Instantly he choked and doubled up. Gifford patted him on the back, grinned, and poured himself a small dose.

He grinned widely, licked his lips, and rubbed his belly in expressive pantomine. Bear Man twisted his head from side to side and swallowed again. The warmth of the whiskey was spreading inside him. He had absolutely no tolerance for alcohol, and already he was feeling that single drink. He hesitated, then took the second one Gifford offered.

He felt strangely light. He grinned full in the face of this kindly white man, and took an experimental step, feeling sure that if he but thrust himself upward with his toes, he could step clear over the nearest pony. It was a grand feeling, almost like the old men told about when god-men floated across the whole nation of the Sioux without ever putting moccasin to grass. He was very happy. This was indeed a good white man, a big man, wide and tall, fit to strike the Crows with a mighty arm, a good man for a friend.

And his medicine—Waugh! Bear Man crooked an arm, felt the muscles flex with unconquerable strength. Waugh! Truly this was strong medicine! He accepted another drink eagerly.

Then he began to see the sense of the white man's gestures. He was pointing to the yellow metal-stone on the string, and then offering the flat bottle. Truly a fine friend! For the worthless thing Bear Man wore around his neck, a simple curiosity only, he was offering the whole bottle of this medicine that made a man double his strength. It was too much! He felt very friendly toward this noble white man.

Bear Man took off his own fine beaded elk shirt, pressed it on the man. He stripped off his leggins, made of fine buffalo calf skin, with a wide band of blue and white beadwork from thigh to ankle. He had to sit down to do this, and he felt how lightly he touched the ground.

The thought came to him that now would be a good time to step over one of the ponies, just to try his legs. But his legs were so light he could not get them to come under him. They persisted in waving in the air before him. Waugh! Such medicine!

He rolled over onto hands and knees, got to his feet, having to stamp his moccasins hard on the earth to make them stay there. The white man was still making insistent gestures. The metal-stone, of course. Bear Man took it off and gave it to the man, who thrust the bottle at him and turned away.

Bear Man felt very sad. He had offended this fine friend with the poorness of his gifts, the very little he had given in return for this magnificent medicine. Emotion choked him until he could hardly utter the words.

"Wait, my good friend," he called. He yanked off his warbonnet, the proud circular spray of black-tipped eagle feathers, with the trailing tail that came nearly to the ground. But his friend was hurrying away, and Bear Man had to trot to catch up. Every time his feet stamped to the ground, the ponies, the men, all jerked and jumped as his powerful legs made the earth quake.

"My friend, come back," he cried. Then the earth pitched under him like a bucking horse and shook him to his knees. Bear Man staggered up and put out a hand to his friend's shoulder, and so strong had he become that his hand caught on the man's shirt collar and ripped it, as another tremor of the earth shook Bear Man to his knees.

Gifford whirled. His face was angry. He spat out a word and raised his hand, as if to strike, and Bear Man knew his gifts still were too small. He pulled his beaded belt apart, and wadded up his breech-clout of red flannel, that hung to his knees, front and back, and offered it, still clutching desperately at the flat little medicine bottle. He was ashamed, for he could hear laughter, and he did not want these whites to think him a poor man. He dropped the breechclout as he tried to rise but the prairie was heaving under him in long, undulating rolls, and his feet were too light to stick to the ground. The laughter rolled around him. He was truly shamed.

EAGLE HORSE heard the laughter as he came around the ponies. His father, Bear Man, was on his knees before one of the waggoners, stark naked except for his moccasins. His face was purple with some peculiar excitement, and his eyes were mad and shiny. His firm mouth was gone slack and rubbery, and he slobbered a little out of the corner of his mouth. He tried to stand, fell back, made whimpering sounds, and stretched a hand to the wagon man.

The big white man had Bear Man's clothing, even his warbonnet, and he wadded them all together and threw them now in Bear Man's face. The other whites were laughing, and the big man said something, and tipped his own bull head back and laughed. Red rage came on Eagle Horse, and he charged into the man and struck him across the mouth with his hand, and cried out, "Shut up your laughter!"

It was a hard blow, delivered with a full-armed swing, all of the strength of the broad shoulders of Eagle Horse behind it, and the man was bowled over. Blood came from his lips. He lashed out with a heavy booted foot, and Eagle Horse felt a streak of pure pain run through his body. He fell almost to his knees, and the man dragged a pistol from his belt and struck at his head.

Eagle Horse dodged but the clubbing barrel numbed his shoulder. His fingers found his knife. The man's eyes widened in his face, he made a croaking noise, and hooked his thumb to cock the pistol. Eagle Horse drove his knife clear through the man's neck, just above where his collarbones made a little 'V' above his hairy chest.

Eagle Horse slapped the body with the flat of his hand, shouted, "Onhey! I claim this one!" A gun bellowed behind him, and he whirled, slashed at a wagon man who leaped back, and then Eagle Horse ran to his pony, snatched his wide quiver that held his bow and arrows and wheeled back to face the tangled knot of mixed Sioux and whites.

It had all been done while a white man's watch might tick four times. Bear Man still sprawled on hands and knees, vacant

eyes stupidly wondering. The buckskinned guide had his rifle balanced ready across his chest, the loop of his pony's reins over his arm. The rest of the whites were milling, some snatching for guns, a couple running headlong for the wagons, abandoning their horses. A young Sioux, Talks-With-Men, flung himself onto his pony and raced across the ragged line of whites, yelling and lashing at them with his quirt, so carried away with excitement that he was ready to charge the whole white nation single-handed. Only when he rode upon the guide, and looked that steady gun muzzle squarely in the face did he pull out to ride a whooping circle while he strung his bow. The rest of the Sioux were ready for a fight.

Ancient smoothbore muskets slid whispering out of rawhide sheaths, and a metallic clacking sounded as the huge hammers were eared back.

Eagle Horse ran across to his father, a burning scheme eating into his belly. He yanked Bear Man to his feet, twisted the draggled red loincloth about him and pushed him towards the horses. The young warriors were crowding the white wagonmen back now, and the situation was poised on a quivering needle point.

The white men were afraid. Their fear showed in their working mouths, the whiteness of their knuckles as they grasped their guns. Eagle Horse could not understand the words but he heard the whiplash voice of Hawk-Who-Sees-Far, the guide, calling to the white men, "Bunch up with me, here. Hang onto yore horses. Don't let 'em fluster you. An' don't shoot 'less one tries to grab yore gun or yore horse. Let 'em see yore gun barr'ls."

EAGLE HORSE and Owl finally got Bear Man onto his pony. He reeled like a sick man, and they had to lash him on with a lariat. Then Eagle Horse said to the older man, "Take him back out of the way, Friend," and ran to catch his own horse.

Battle rage ran hot through his veins. The whites had formed a ragged group around the guide, and Eagle Horse rode straight at them, and nocked an arrow as he rode. Then the guide swung his led horse around broadside, thrust his long rifle across the saddle, and his voice came clear and unafraid, "Friend, I will kill you. You have done enough. Go back and take the others with you or I will kill you!"

The dark eye of the gun frowned steadily on Eagle Horse. He knew this man, knew he talked with a straight tongue.

But he cried hotly, "These white dogs make fools of us! I will shut up the laughter in their mouths!"

"Go back," came the guide's deadly voice. The unwavering gun muzzle shifted to follow his body. Eagle Horse wheeled away. He turned on his saddle pad and loosed his arrow, flat out, a foot over the heads of the white waggoners. He laughed grimly at their frightened ducking as the missile made its ripping sound in their ears.

He shouted defiantly, "Hear me, White Men! From this day your laughter will be weeping. Oh, you will cry for this day, all of you!" Then he turned his back on them and rode away. A few of the exciteable young ones still hung about, making little sham charges at the whites, but most of them followed Eagle Horse. He rode hard to keep ahead of them. His heart was heavy with shame. His face had been blackened.

V

THE FLAMES of war ran through the white nation. It bloomed its first hot little blossom at a place called Sumter, ran a crooked line of fire like a train of powder all the way between North and South, and there was weeping in the stiff wooden lodges of the white men. The warriors of West Point chose sides, and on both sides they won many battle honors. Not feathers, or painted ponies, but bars and stars of gold to wear on shoulder and collar. Not tassels on their lances, but flat coin-like devices that hung on gaily-colored ribbons were pinned to the chest.

And, like Crawler, and Crazy Horse, Red Cloud and Sitting Bull, the white warrior's names were known to their people. Names like Custer, Stuart, Carrington, Lee, Grant; all household names, names that stood for many hard battles and honors won in war.

The Sioux did not concern themselves

much with this white man's war. It did take the blue-coats out of the forts; but that was no more than the promise. The Grandfather, the chief of the white men, had made a promise, had written it on a paper for all to see: *For so long as water runs and grass grows, this land shall be the land of the Sioux . . .*

But a little later, he sent his young blue-coated warriors to build a fort—and another—and another . . . to see that my white grandsons and my red ones live in peace . . .

Bear Man was dead. He died as a man should die, in battle, facing the enemy. A blue-coat sighted down the shiny barrel of his fine breech-loading rifle, and Bear Man died. Eagle Horse took him back to his own lodge, dressed him in his finest clothing, laid him away in a scaffold in the trees. He shot a good pony, painted and saddled and ready to ride, under the trees, so that his father would not be left afoot in the Happy Hunting Grounds. He smeared his face with black and stayed in his lodge for four days.

The years slid past a man. Where did they go? Yesterday he was of twenty summers—and today it was forty. Only now he said it, forty winters. Summers, a young man remembered. An old man, winters. The cold bit at a man harder and deeper. And the mouths to feed were never forgotten. Blackbird, his woman. Two sons. Blackbird's mother, in her old years before she died.

The warpath no longer beckoned so hard. The battle heat went out of a man too. He had never sought the white men since that day his father had been made drunk. Sometimes he traded with them for the things they had that a Sioux could not make. Ten buffalo robes for a worn-out smooth-bore flintlock. A robe for a double handful of powder. The pig lead a man got for a robe did not weigh him down either. Eagle Horse did not hang around the white man's fort after his trading was done. He left the whites alone and asked only that they do as much for him.

Still the white men came. The many winters had beat at the lodge of Eagle Horse, which Blackbird had made and remade, of the buffalo hides he brought in from the hunt. Now the buffalo were few, and the land of the Sioux was like a puddle of water on the thirsty earth, shrinking, shrinking, closing in like the walls of a trap. The road of the iron horse was coming across the land, strips of iron laid on logs; some of the far-riding young men had seen it.

Eagle Horse was a Fox Soldier chief, now. He was heavier, quieter, and the blood ran not so hot in his veins. The nations were splitting up. The Minniconjou were many, too many to camp all together and find good hunting. Eagle Horse took his little tribe, forty lodges, trailed across Crazy Woman creek, Powder River. He found poor hunting. He visited the Oglalas a few days, talked with Red Cloud. Red Cloud had had poor hunting too.

Red Cloud's heart was hot against the whites.

"I drove them back this summer," the fiery warrior cried. "I will drive them out again. The white men are liars. Blanket Chief was with them, and they tried to cut through us to the Powder but we drove them back."

Eagle Horse nodded. He remembered Blanket Chief—Jim Bridger—from the old days. He thought suddenly, Ai, we are young no longer. Our land and our buffalo are gone, and I feel old—old.

RED CLOUD went on, "Now, they want me to meet with them at the place they call Laramie. I do not think I will go."

Eagle Horse said, "Perhaps if you talk with them there, tell them that they can come no further, they will listen."

Red Cloud snorted, "The white soldiers do not listen; they talk. They tell me the Grandfather is sad with me because I fight with his grandsons. Waugh! He is their Grandfather. He sits in his lodge by the salt water and makes words that this is his land, that we live on it only because he permits it! Waugh! Let him bring his tribe, let him ride his warpony at the head of his family; let him come to me and look in my face and tell me that this is his land! The blood of my father, and his father, and his father, beyond the memory of the oldest of the heralds, lies in this land. Their bones lie with the bones of the buffalo and the

bones of their enemies, and the Grandfather says it is not my land!"

"Hau!" said Eagle Horse in bitter agreement, "Hau!"

Red Cloud's face was dark with the hot blood of his anger. "I will go," he cried suddenly. "I will go this one more time. I will tell them again. But only once—no more!"

Eagle Horse rode with him, for Red Cloud said he would be honored to have such a famous warrior hear his words. It was a long ride. Across Antelope creek, Cheyenne River, the broad Platte, to the forks where Laramie stood. Eagle Horse walked with Red Cloud into the log walls, stalking stiffly so as not to show the chill that he felt. He had never been under a roof before in his life, and the log rooms were like traps. They closed in on a man, stifled his breath, shut out the free wind that blew across the land of the Sioux.

Colonel Carrington, they called the bluecoat chief. His face was pale above the black beard that hid his mouth and jaw. His medicine, a silver eagle, was on each shoulder of his blue coat, and his battle marks were bright ribbons on his chest. He spoke, in Boston talk, and an Indian, a Pawnee, dressed like a soldier, turned his words to Sioux.

"The White Eagle," said the interpreter, "asks which of you is Red Cloud?" He stood very stiff, this Indian soldier, looking straight ahead, between the Sioux and the table where the white chiefs sat. Red Cloud grunted.

The interpreter said something in Boston talk and a couple of the whites came forward with hands out. Red Cloud pulled his blanket tight about him and looked at the floor. He would not even look at the whites much less touch hands with them. Eagle Horse saw Carrington's face grow red. The rebuffed whites strode back to the table.

The interpreter passed on the words of Carrington:

"The Grandfather has sent me to talk with you people. It is his wish that we shall all live in peace. But we can have no peace when you Indians kill the white men, the warriors of the Grandfather, and steal the horses of the Grandfather. But the Grandfather is generous. It is his wish to make a road, and he will pay . . ."

Red Cloud stood up. His eyes were alight, and a stiff little smile came and went on his wide mouth. Then he shouted, "You, White Eagle, have come to steal the road! The Grandfather sends us presents, wants us to sell him our land for a road, but you come with soldiers to steal it before the Sioux says yes or no! You sent soldiers this past summer. You bring soldiers now. You bring us behind your walls, and you say you will buy a road! And soldiers stand at the door with guns in their hands!

"I will talk with you no more! I go now, and I will fight you! As long as life is in me, I will fight you for the hunting grounds of my people!"

Eagle Horse came to his feet with Red Cloud. He watched the faces of the whites, saw their sudden scowls, and his hand clenched on the hilt of his knife. Very softly, under his breath, he began to chant a death song. He decided he would kill the false Indian first, the one who wore the uniform. Then, if he was still alive, he would charge the soldiers with guns at the door. But the whites made no move. Red Cloud threw his blanket about him and stalked to the door, Eagle Horse at his side.

For a second, the sentries hesitated. Then they stepped aside, and the pair of warriors shouldered through. Eagle Horse took a deep breath and let the heavy skinning knife slide back into its sheath.

THE WHITE EAGLE, CARRINGTON, came north and west, across the Sioux nation. Eagle Horse was moving ahead, in the same general direction, but the hunting was poor. The young men grew surly and full of fight. Even Eagle Horse felt the heat of anger, for the white wagon men were moving through, in compact trains, that bristled with rifles. They slaughtered anything that moved on the prairie, ate what they wanted, left the rest to rot. Eagle Horse himself found three precious buffalo in one day. The tongues, hearts and livers, and a few fat ribs had been taken. The rest was a ripening stench under the burning sun, covered with clouds of swarming flies and small birds.

They caught a few. The eldest son of Eagle Horse came into the camp with

a new rifle. But he came sullenly, without any proud chanting for he led another horse, on which was lashed the body of the second son, his brother, With Horns. The eldest son, Crow Killer, sat over the fire in his father's lodge, his face blackened, his only movement a slow stroking of the polished walnut butt of the rifle. For two days he would not speak.

When he did speak, the story was soon told. The two brothers had been hunting. They had killed an antelope. While they were skinning it a scouting party of the wagonmen came out of a draw and charged them. Crow Killer and With Horns had only their bows for neither owned a gun. The five white men all had rifles. There was no place to run, no time to duck into a fold of ground to cover them out of rifle range. The two lads flung themselves onto their ponies and charged straight into the white men, hoping in the confusion to get enough of a start to get away.

With Horns was shot off his horse before he could strike a blow. Crow Killer could not describe much of the rest of it. He was crazed, he said, and all the world turned red. He rode straight into the white men, threw his body away. He had fourteen arrows and he shot them all.

He must have wrested a gun from one of the men for when his senses came back he held the broken weapon in his hands. Two white men were dead and three horses were down. One white man was running afoot across the prairie, the other two were fighting their horses and trying to reload their guns. Crow Killer slid from his pony and snatched up the other gun, and the white men yelled and fell back. Crow Killer did not shoot. He held the gun on them while he remounted, then he grabbed his brother's body by one wrist and rode away. He had the gun, and the white men did not chase him. When he could catch With Horn's pony, he lashed his brother's body on its back and came back to the camp. But he had run from them, his brother had been killed, and his face was black. And he was just sixteen years old.

Eagle Horse put his younger son away on his burial scaffold. His heart was heavy, and his plan was to strike camp at the end of four day's mourning; to turn his back on the white man's road, and go to the high country where Sitting Bull and the Hunkpapa were hunting. But Crazy Horse, the Oglala, rode into the camp with a big party of young men.

He smoked politely, ate and talked with Eagle Horse in his lodge. He was a wolf for fighting, this Crazy Horse. With thick features, a determined jaw, he rode into battle with his lank black hair flying loose in contempt of death. No hunter of buffalo, he, but a hunter of men; and he spoke now almost abruptly.

"The White Eagle, Carrington, builds a fence of logs on the Pine Creek. He cuts the trees, and frightens the game. He is big with pride, for he has made his road into our lands, and we stand like women with our hands under our blankets.

"I am going to prick these proud bladders. The Oglala are men. Black Shield will be coming with his Minninconjou. You are Minninconjou. Ride with us and wipe out the white man's mark. We smoked with them, and touched the pen that said the white man would keep out of our land. Now the white man's wagons are like fleas on an old dog's back, and they drive us before them like cattle. Let us show them that we are not cattle but men."

Eagle Horse felt the old heat coming, the warming of his blood, but his heart was heavy, for cords stronger than bowstrings ran from his heart to the scaffold where his son lay newly dead.

He said slowly, "My friend, Crazy Horse, my path is not the warpath. I turn my back on the white man. My people are few, and we have not enough robes and meat for the winter. I have heard that Sitting Bull, the Hunkpapa, has good medicine for calling the buffalo. Perhaps in the spring . . ."

"In the spring," said Crazy Horse bluntly, "the Sioux will be beggars. Where white men walk the grass is poisoned and the buffalo go away. Give the white man a hand-span, he takes a day's ride. Give him meat, and he must also have the hide —not as a friend but because it is his right. I say they are bladders of pride, and I will prick them!"

The boy, Crow Killer, said suddenly, "I will go with you, Uncle."

Eagle Horse turned quickly, a protest forming on his lips. Then he thought,

He is my son, but I can no longer keep him to the shadow of my lodge. He is a man. The protest died without a sound. But he could not let this party of young hot-heads go alone. He had no authority over them, for no Sioux followed a chief unless it was his wish, but they would respect his age and his honors. So the camp was struck, but by the women, who moved on. Eagle Horse opened his war-bag again.

It was a big party. Black Shield and his Minninconjous, Crazy Horse and the Oglala, a few Cheyennes, all together must have totalled a thousand fighting men. They moved in on the fort in the pine woods.

VI

COLONEL CARRINGTON was having his own troubles. The civilian guide, Jim Bridger, showed a strange respect for this bunch of savages, which surely meant that Bridger must be getting old, for he had lived many years with the Indians and was still in good health. In fact he had once told the Colonel of traveling two thousand miles through hostile territory with a party of no more than a dozen, and nary a man hurt. What then, was his uneasiness about, when this post held 700 men, uniformed and armed, instilled with the finest of Army tradition? Jim spat, and said succinctly, "Them boys of mine was mountain men, Kernel. They knew Injuns."

The Colonel replied a little testily, "And were armed with muzzle-loading flintlocks . . ."

"Which they could shoot," interrupted the scout. Carrington flushed a deep angry red. "I'll have these recruits looking like West Pointers in a month," he said.

"Which'll prob'ly scare the h'ar right off'n them Sioux," said Bridger placidly. His wrinkled little terrier face showed no amusement at all.

On the far side of the parade ground the band stopped in a sudden dying squall, and the bandmaster severely laced down an erring musician. Bridger spat sardonically.

Captain Fetterman came up to the Colonel's quarters at an easy canter and swung down off his big black gelding.

"Timber detail coming in, sir," he reported. "Sergeant Mac told me the mowing machine is broken again, as I came across the parade. I sent a blacksmith to look at it."

"Keep them at it," said Carrington. "I want that parade mowed off so we can get at proper drilling. Any sign of hostiles with the timber party?"

"Just the usual. Two here, three there, hanging back out of rifle shot. They respect Army rifles. But I'm getting sick of their sitting there. I'd like permission to take a patrol out and rough them up a bit. They'll hang around all winter if they're not taught a lesson."

The Colonel said, "What do you think, Bridger?"

"Better make it somethin' better'n a patrol. Matter o' fack, I wouldn't go stirrin' around amongst 'em till you got the fort where you want it. An' you'll need more men . . ."

"Hogwash!" snorted the Captain. "Give me eighty men and I'll ride through the whole damned Sioux nation! Those animals won't stand up to Army shooting!"

"Once saw a man," said the scout unperturbed, "who c'ud hold his nose an' blow an' the wind would whistle out'n his ears. He talked better sense than that."

"Your age," said the Captain through his teeth, "gives you certain privileges. But I wouldn't ride them to hard."

"Ain't it so, now," said the old guide placidly. The Captain stalked stiffly to his gelding and swung up.

"Ambitious, ain't he?" inquired Bridger drily, as Fetterman cantered off across the half-mown parade ground.

Carrington sighed. "It's a young man's failing," he said. "He was a Lieutenant-Colonel, brevet, during the War. It's hard to drop two grades then get stuck out here with no prospects of action."

"I'd say the prospects was purty good," said the scout. "That party of Cheyennes I talked with had the straight goods. The Sioux is beginnin' to cluster up an' projeck around. Likely he'll git action till he's sick of it."

"I doubt they'll attack a force of this strength," said the Colonel. The scout cut a sidelong eye at him but said nothing. He eased his spare wiry frame in the chair and hummed softly.

The fort was practically completed. There were logs enough on hand to finish the last of the building, and soon there would be cordwood enough for the winter. Then the wood trains could end their hazardous daily trip from the fort to the woods and back. Carrington had set up a signal station out on the hill which kept the fort in contact with the work party. The men would be glad to be done with the job. It was four days until Christmas.

At 11:00 o'clock the signal-man sent the message—INDIANS. Then he rode his horse in the signal Bridger had taught him, which meant, BIG PARTY. Then the flags semaphored, WAGON CORRALLED SOUTH SULLIVAN. The post bugle screeched out "Boots and Saddles."

Captain Fetterman came across Officers Row at a run, buckling his belt as he came.

"Orders, sir?"

Carrington snapped out, "Support the wood train, relieve it, report to me. Do not engage or pursue any Indians other than to relieve the wood train. Under no circumstances are you to cross Lodge Trail Ridge." Captain Fetterman snapped a hasty salute and wheeled to run toward the assembly point.

They rode out, 78 officers and men, with two civilians who went along for the excitement. At the last moment Captain Brown came running and attached himself to the column without orders. Bridger watched them go, automatically counting as they went out the huge log gate. 77-79-80-81.

Fetterman had his 80 men.

EAGLE HORSE was ready to go home. Even with his red blanket belted around him with the corners across his shoulders to form a coat, the cold got into a man's bones. He looked across at his son and a little pang of regret went through him. The lad was naked above the waist. He had a blanket belted like a kilt around his waist but he was not feeling the cold at all. His face was painted solid red, and he held the captured breech-loading rifle across his thighs. He was with a group of young Minninconjous who watched Crazy Horse and Black Shield canter back and forth, sending the warriors to cover along the creek. Eagle Horse pulled out and rode across the draw and back into the brush. He had no feeling for war. He stationed himself where he could watch his son, and dismounted, to keep his slow blood moving. Ai! A man grows old.

When the first sporadic firing started over where the Army wagons were, not a twig moved. Not a leaf stirred to show the hundreds of Indians hidden along the little valley.

Another burst of firing broke out up on the ridge. Another burst. Despite himself Eagle Horse felt his blood begin to pound in his veins. For was he not a warrior, is not the sound of battle enough to stir a fighting man's heart?

The firing came nearer. Then the decoys, a dozen mounted Sioux, came up over the ridge, riding to and fro, firing back as if fighting a rear-guard action. Then they dropped off the ridge, came down the trail, still whooping and firing back. The blue-coats came over the ridge.

There were two parties, one afoot, one mounted, not hurrying, but steadily pressing on the decoys, the cavalry firing intermittently. Eagle Horse clamped a rough hand on his pony's nostrils to stop a whickering at the Army horses.

The blue-coats came through the jaws of the trap. By the time the decoys had forded the creek the foot soldiers were well into the defile. The decoys split, swung right and left, crossed columns. That was the signal!

The valley exploded. Out of the shielding brush and trees they charged, Minniconjou, Oglala, Cheyenne, driving their ponies at the blue-coats, tearing apart the crisp air with their battle yells. The guns roared. Arrows ripped through the air in chunks, in bundles, in flights, like so many blind deadly birds. Eagle Horse looked for his son.

He was in the forefront of the young Minninconjous, riding like a young red-faced fiend. Young Thunder Hawk rode shoulder to shoulder with him, then suddenly whipped his pony ahead, drove into the infantry, struck a soldier down with his lance. He counted the first coup of the battle. Crow Killer struck second.

The infanry did not last long. They fell back into a jumble of rock, kept up

a steady fire until nothing much could be seen but rolling clouds of smoke. The thousand charging Sioux rolled over them like a great wave. The roaring of the guns fell off. It was almost at if the sound were being smothered under a huge blanket. It was forty guns . . . thirty . . . twenty . . . ten . . . one last bellow of a big-bored infantry rifle . . . then the flat whip cracks of the cavalry carbines, further up the hill.

For an instant Eagle Horse felt his heart stop. Then he saw the buckskin pony with zigzag stripes of red running down each leg, the thin young body with the solid red face moving in on the mounted blue-coats.

Half the blue-coats were unhorsed. They moved back up the ridge, firing like machines. One trooper went sprawling as his horse was shot from under him, and he lay there for a few seconds. Then he scrambled up, found his carbine, walked backward to follow the retreating troop. Young Crow Killer came charging out of the smoke at him. The trooper yelled, flung up the carbine, and Crow Killer whipped an arrow back to the head, snapped it clear through the man's blue chest.

He leaned down, struck the coup, and twenty arrows made a pincushion of the trooper's body an instant later. The cavalry were still fighting their way back up the slope.

Now the infantry were finished off, the Sioux came streaming in on the cavalry, a stream that turned to a flood, that rolled up the slope in a screaming, blood-lusting tide, and the air was thick with arrows.

Then someone among the cavalry with his wits still about him, shouted an order, and the troopers turned all the horses loose. The fight broke.

A MAN can fight soldiers any time. The gods above know there are enough of them for everybody. But not every day did a man get a chance to capture one of those big strong Army horses. The man hunters instantly became horse hunters.

Eagle Horse came up from the rear. He had no fire in his heart against these troopers, but a horse is a horse. Since his pony was fresh, he drove past two frantically quirting Oglalas, uncoiled his picket rope, sent it cracking ahead like a white teamster's whip. The end of the rope popped on the rump of a big saddled black gelding, and Eagle Horse shouted out his claim. The Oglalas swerved to chase another. Eagle Horse chased the gelding a quarter of a mile across the steep brushy slope before he could catch the reins. The troopers gained the ridge and forted up in the rocks.

This was not good fighting. It was just shooting, and how could a man gain honor by simply shooting at a bunch of soldiers? Besides, they were dug in, and had no more horses, and some of the Sioux, especially the older men, began to fall out of the fight. But the young ones were hot. The freezing cold did not cool them. They had honors to win, and the soldiers were there. They dismounted and started up toward that bristling crest afoot.

Some of them made it. Eagle Horse saw Crow Killer snaking his way up, slithering over the ice-covered rocks on his bare chest, questing eagerly as any hunting wolf, and Eagle Horse yelled, "My son, come back!"

Then a young Minninconjou stood up, in full sight of the soldiers and yelled, "Hopo! Hopo! Let's go!" The young men came up at a scrambling rush.

Crow Killer yelled, came up in a running crouch, and charged straight into the rocks. A big blue-coat, with gold "V's" on his sleeves, rose to meet him. For a long second they stood, the trooper with his carbine crossing Crow Killer's chest while the butt of the gun deflected the lad's driving knife, and then the big man put his weight on the gun, threw him back, and pulled off the shot. Crow Killer tumbled back across the rock, hit on his shoulders, took three limp, sprawling somersaults down the rocky slope and lay still.

It hit Eagle Horse across the belly in a numbing blow. His mind rejected it. It could not be. But his eyes went back to the limp body on the slope, and his eyes did not lie. It was his son, his only son, and he was dead.

He slipped down from his mount, started trudging up the slope. He walked like a man asleep, and he did not even hear the spiteful smack of bullets into

the frozen ground around him. He stepped over a rock, and as he lifted his moccasined foot, a chip flew from that rock, and the bullet screamed off so close it clipped beads from his leggins. He paid it no heed.

Straight up the hill he went, and if one bullet missed him, a hundred went futilely by. He stalked straight to the body of his son. He picked him up, turned deliberately and stalked down the slope again, feeling nothing but the measured thumping of one limp arm against his thigh that marked every stride.

Captain Ten Eyk brought in forty-nine bodies. He reported that the firing had stopped just before he arrived at the ridge. It had taken him twelve minutes to organize his relief troop from the time they had heard the first firing from the fort. It had taken approximately thirty minutes to reach the ridge. Fetterman, and his eighty men, "with which he could ride through the whole Sioux nation," had lasted just about forty minutes.

There was no need for Jim Bridger to say anything. He went out with Carrington and another troop the next day to recover the rest of the bodies.

VII

EAGLE HORSE sat in his lodge. He had buried his son, alone, and he had told Blackbird that their son was dead. The world was empty, now; there was nothing to look forward to. Hunting parties went out, men came to his lodge to ask his skill in hunting. He would not go. He sat silent in council, let the other men have their say as to where camp should be moved, and when. He smoked with them but he said nothing.

He destroyed everything in his lodge that white men had made or touched. He threw out his blankets, the red one and the blue one. He threw away his wool leggins and the blue army shirt. He gave away his gun and all the powder and lead.

Blackbird did not disturb him. Indeed, she seldom did. The years had done their slow work on her too, dulled some of the fire within her that had caused Eagle Horse, in their early years, to nick-name her Fireleaf, from the peppery little herb that grew along Elk River. She had been a good woman to him. But she was not a bearer of sons. They had lived in their own lodge for two summers before Crow Killer came. Then three more before With Horns. She had two still-born daughters after that, and then Wakan Tanka had seen fit to make her barren.

Now, moving quietly about the lodge, tending her fire and her cooking, she felt a little twinge of remorse at her jealousy. Polygamy was a way of life with the Sioux. Generally a man took a younger sister of his wife after the first couple of years, a sister because the two women were used to one another, a second wife because there were more women than men in the Sioux nation.

But no second wife stayed more than a single night in the lodge with Blackbird. They went back to their family, in haste, and sometimes, in fear. Eagle Horse would demand a reason, and Blackbird would look away and say, "They were not good cooks."

She used no other excuse, but after she had fed him well, she would sometimes tell him, "I am woman enough for any man." She was, too.

Sometimes Eagle Horse would threaten to beat her but she did not cower. She would turn her back, slip her blouse to bare her shoulders, and wait. Somehow he never did get around to give her the beatings she deserved.

It was a bad winter. The cold split the very trees. Meat was scarce in the lodges of the little tribe. Twenty-odd lodges, now, for the Sioux came and went as they pleased, and many of the young men thought Eagle Horse too cautious. They attached themselves to Black Shield or other Minninconjou chiefs. Some went with the Crazy Horse and his Oglalas.

Barking Dog foolishly tried to kill a bear alone. He found the den, smelled the bear, and thought of the meat. He built a fire, made a heavy torch, threw the blazing torch into the den, and stood ready, with an arrow to the string.

The bear came out, stupid with cold and its hibernating instincts—but it was no black bear. It was a white, what the white men called grizzly. Barking Dog put one arrow into it as he saw its first

movement in the mouth of the cave. The great beast came charging with a maddened rush. Barking Dog got off his second arrow and tried to run.

But the snow was thigh-deep. Barking Dog wallowed, with nightmare slowness, and the grizzly shouldered through like a great bounding ball. They found Barking Dog torn to pieces. Two of the young hunters tracked the bear half a day until a howling blizzard drove them back.

When Eagle Horse came back from the little rock cave where Barking Dog was put away, there was another in his lodge. Blackbird looked at him, a quick, sidelong look, and turned away from the fire with a steaming wooden bowl of soup in her hands. Over her shoulder, he saw two wondering black eyes watching him. Eagle Horse grunted questioningly.

Blackbird looked humbly at the floor. "Behold your son," she said, using the words the old granny midwives used, to tell a man of a birth in his family.

Eagle Horse grunted explosively.

Blackbird went on, hurriedly, still looking not at him, but at a spot on the ground, midway between them. "The lodge was empty, my man. The woman of Barking Dog was alone, with no man to warm her lodge, and she has moved to the lodge of her father. He has already eight in his lodge. I took the boy."

Eagle Horse said nothing. He stripped off his heavy buffalo robe, unlaced the front of his elk shirt, and sat on his own couch, leaned back against the willow back-rest. He looked straight ahead. "I would eat," he said stonily.

Blackbird hurriedly fetched him a bowl of stewed meat.

"It has been boiled too long," he said. "It is mostly soup."

Blackbird said tartly, "Old men cannot chew tough meat."

Eagle Horse splashed his horn spoon mightily in the bowl. "Hold your tongue, woman," he thundered, "before I take a stick to you!"

BLACKBIRD muttered something about "an old man's stick." It was an earthy quote, which gave a double meaning to the word stick, and Eagle Horse grunted and spooned into the bowl vigorously.

Eagle Horse found his mind wandering back over the complicated calendar of events he carried inside his head. Yes, that was it; the winter on the Greasy Grass, where High Goose killed the pale cow. The boy would be four years old.

He filled his pipe, looked covertly across the flaming twig he used to light it. The child's black eyes were fixed firmly on him. Eagle Horse cleared his throat, growlingly, leaned forward to spit in the fire. The robes were thrown back, the little boy sat up, made a treble hawking, sputtered his lips. Eagle Horse choked on a laugh, felt Blackbird's eyes on him, and coughed. Blackbird smiled secretly, and took the bowls outside to scrub them in the snow.

Eagle Horse solemnly scratched his nose with the long stem of the pipe, crossing his eyes to see what he was doing, and heard the smothered giggle from the robes. He chuckled. It had always made the other boys laugh too.

Bear Man, he thought, would be a good name for the boy. It was my father's name, an honorable name. A man needs a son. The question of the boy's staying never came up again.

Spring came like a land reborn.

Eagle Horse walked across the spongy earth and filled his lungs with the wind. Buffalo wind. Free wind. Blowing its way all across the land of the Sioux; from the land of the Spaniards to the land of the Red-coat's Queen. Touching the Big Muddy to the east, the Stony Mountains to the west. Eagle Horse sent a herald around to call council.

They moved out onto the prairie. The sun was warm on the land, and for the time, the prairie was one vast bouquet, blue and white and pink and red, as the Mother earth cast off the winter and decked herself as a bride for spring.

They camped a while with Crazy Horse and his Oglalas. The buffalo were moving, the scouts reported, and they went to the Rosebud, formed a big camp with more Minninconjou and Two Kettles. The Hunkpapa came dragging in, set up their own huge circle. The men visited in one another's camps; Sitting Bull, no longer a reedy lad with a proud chin, but wrinkled now, limping from a Crow bullet he'd caught thirty years back, though still with

that humorous quirk to the corner of his mouth, high chief of the Silent Eater's Society; Gall, Crazy Horse, Eagle Horse, Red Cloud; a stirring roll-call of the fighting men of the Sioux nations. Crawler was there, and Low Dog, Rain-In-The-Face, White Bull, Iron Claw; smoking, talking, feasting.

The young men paraded the banks of the Rosebud, wrapped in their blankets, ogling the girls. The women, in groups, chattering and gossiping, passing on the news of births and marriages, keeping hands busy with quilling tipi linings, beading shirts, making moccasins.

The older boys, ten and twelve summers, fighting sham battles among the willows, hunting with blunt arrows one of themselves who wore a buffalo calf skin complete with head. He pranced and bawled and died realistically thirty times a day. Toddlers, exploring the dazzling new world about the lodge to the length of the buckskin tether their mothers had thoughtfully attached to a tent stake.

IT WAS EASY to remember how it had always been thus, easy to forget for a moment that the white men were crowding in, easy to forget that for every fat buffalo they saw now, a thousand were gone. Ai! That was a fine spring hunt on the Rosebud.

A small drag came in from the south, ten lodges. Agency Indians. Though there were old friends among them, to be greeted boisterously, to be invited to smoke, they somehow were set apart.

They were dirty. They wore Army issue shirts and coats, rank and greasy from a winter's wear. Much calico and little buckskin among the women, and the tipis were ragged and pieced out with canvas. They had knives, and a few guns, but their skin was shallow and some had sores, from eating too much white flour and fat pork. They had sugar and coffee, and some of the women had tin ovens, in which they baked a gluey dough of flour and salt in water, that lay in the stomach like lead.

The young men spent all their time down on the river bank with the girls. Few of them wanted to hunt. One day Eagle Horse caught one of them cutting a haunch of meat across the grain, to make a flat round steak that fried up like a chunk of hide, with no juices and no taste. But the Agency Indian salted it liberally, drank much water after, and declared it was good.

"A soldier cook showed me how," he said proudly. Eagle Horse had his own opinion of Army cooks.

Inevitably, the talk in council turned to the whites. Sitting Bull preached the same philosophy as Eagle Horse.

"Turn your backs on them," he said. "Do not fight them, unless they fire on you first. Take nothing from them and give them nothing."

Crazy Horse was vehement. "This is all there is to it," he declared. "The Grandfather's young men have been taught the warpath. They say we must sit in the Agencies and starve. If we leave the Agencies, if we are driven from the Agency by empty bellies, then they come to kill us for not being at the Agency. The blue-coats should go home and turn their hands to the plow for they say that is the only honest way to live. But these blue-coats would rather shoot Indians than work. The Grandfather cannot control his young men. Waugh! I say we should give them a belly-full of fighting. Perhaps then we can hunt in peace."

Sitting Bull said firmly, "I turn my back on the white men. I will go my way, let them go theirs. I do not hunt them. But if they seek me, they will find me."

"Hau!" agreed Eagle Horse, "Hau!"

But the white men came. "Long Hair" Custer rode through the Black Hills with a great Army train. The newspapers printed some marvelous lies about the ferocity of the Indians and of the awful fate of any white man who dared to encroach on their lands. This was good for a few vicarious shudders. But the big news blazoned in tall letters. Gold at the grass-roots! Ferocious warriors, faces painted hideously, camp jealously in this barren land to keep their riches from the brave white explorers!

Gold! That changed the complexion of things. Gold! Indians? Who are they? Do they think they own that land, or something? It's Guvment land, ain't it? An' who's the Guvment? I got a vote, ain't I?

The President sent orders that the miners were to be kept out of the hills,

in accordance with existing treaty.

The Army, straight-faced, replied that the task was impossible. Particularly since a penurious Congress had slashed the Army budget. By the time the money was raised the only sensible way to spend it was in establishing Army posts in the "gold country to protect the white miners from the depredations of the Indians."

The puddle that was the land of the Sioux shrank in the hot sun . . .

VIII

TWO MOONS' CHEYENNES did not come in to the Agency. It was two hundred miles through snow belly-deep on a horse. His camp was in good shape. He had meat and robes. And he was feeding Agency Indians. So was Sitting Bull. They did not go in. The Army came after them.

Six hundred soldiers came out of the snow. Two Moons' camp was less than a hundred lodges, but there were a few of Crazy Horse's Oglala camped with him. They tumbled naked from their sleeping robes and fought as the women and children streamed back through the snow to escape. Then the blue-coats came at them on their big Army horses, drove them back, and burned the camp. They took seven hundred horses. The Cheyennes got them back that night, and the Army's beef herd with them. But the lodges, fourteen or sixteen buffalo hides to the lodge; all the robes, the bales of dried meat, pemmican, berries; powder, lead, clothing—all went up in smoke.

They left bloody tracks behind them in the snow, those Cheyennes. Naked, hungry, they marched through the belly-deep snow, through cold that burst the tree trunks open like over-ripe melons, and Sitting Bull took them in. The blue-coats went home empty handed, but though they had the finest of winter clothing, not all of them got back with their hands. Ai! That was a cold winter! It united the Sioux nations.

Eagle Horse had joined his lodges with Sitting Bull's for the winter. He took a young Cheyenne, Brave Dog, his woman and baby son, into his lodge. The woman was industrious, and got along famously with Blackbird. Brave Dog was a hunter, and he was out in all weather, but the game was scarce in such times. The extra hungry mouths turned a good winter into a thin one.

Sitting Bull, Eagle Horse, Crazy Horse, all the honor men of the various Societies, gathered in Sitting Bull's big lodge.

Sitting Bull sent the pipe around. Then he said, "My friends, there is no end to the white man's greed. His blue-coats do not want peace. We, particularly myself and Eagle Horse, have turned our backs on the white man's road. We have left them alone. We wish to live as our fathers did, standing on our own ground, breathing our own air, killing our own meat. The white man will not leave us alone. He has burned the paper with his promises. He eats at our land with a great mouth. I have had enough.

"Let us call all our people together in one place. Let the white men see how many we are, and that we mean what we say. Let us be all together, and if the white men want fight, let them fight the whole Sioux nation. Let them know that we are Sioux, and that we will be pushed no further."

Crazy Horse shouted, "Hau!" Eagle Horse and some of the other, older, warriors agreed more reluctantly. But the word went out over the length and breadth of the nation, even to the Cheyennes, even to the Agencies, and the nations of the Sioux began to gather.

Ogala, Minninconjou, Two Kettles, Santee, Sans Arc, Blackfoot, Hunkpapa. As soon as the snow was gone they came to Sitting Bull, camped on the Rosebud. Children, women, dogs. Dragging their bundled lodges on travois, herding their horses; sober warbonnet men with a dozen horses slapped with a red-painted hand to show they had been won in battle; young men, eager hunters, with a single proud coup feather standing erect in glossy black braided hair; agency men, sick and sallow from eating starved beef and fat pork, riding stolen horses and carrying stolen arms; a tide of red flesh, making their last stand in the face of the white ocean.

They grazed off the grass at the Rosebud, decided to move to the Little Bighorn. Never again was the sight to be seen. The drag was a solid half-mile wide, and the rear riders could not see the leaders.

Two thousand lodges, a nation of free people, moving their combined cities across the land. Sun, they say, looked down that day, on his people moving across the great smiling land of the Sioux, crawling like a great line of ants from where Sun saw them, and he smiled. For Sitting Bull had held a Sun Dance, and Sun had sent him a vision.

The Chiefs rode ahead. Behind came the Cheyennes. The Oglala then, four hundred lodges. Minniconjou and Santee, combining nearly a thousand lodges. Hunkpapa last, with a few of the others who had joined their circle.

THE BLUE-COATS came. The Sioux were camped at Ash Creek, and the young scouts came with word that the earth was black with soldiers, back on the Rosebud. "Three Stars" Crook was the leader.

A thousand warriors went back to fight them. The battle lasted all day. Three Stars went back where he came from. Crazy Horse covered himself with glory, for Sitting Bull took no part in the fight. He and Eagle Horse sat their horses on a little rise above the battleground, watched the young men, outnumbered by a third, outgunned two to one, fight the blue-coats to a stand-still.

It made an old man warm. It heated the blood of a born fighting man to fever pitch. But it was the young man's day, and the two of them, graying, weathered, little wrinkled folds about their eyes and mouth, saw themselves in bygone days, quick, arrogant, resentful of authority that tried to impose itself by force, following a leader only because they respected him, and admired him; not because he had any authority over them . . . Ai! Three Stars got his belly full of Sioux fighting that day. He went home to lick his wounds.

The two old men rode back to the camp. The same thought rode with them. *Now, perhaps they have seen. We want nothing from them but to be left alone. For that we will fight. Maybe now we can live as men.*

So they moved to the Greasy Grass, along the Little Bighorn, snaking their way across the free land, so many that the old heralds posted themselves along the trail to point out where the big separate circles of each nation should camp —so many that the first tribes were set up and fed before the last of them dragged in after dusk. They sang and they danced and prepared for the hunt.

But Long Hair Custer was coming with five troops of his blue-coats, the mystic symbol "7" on their tilted caps catching the sunlight, winking, winking . . .

It was a hot morning. Heat devils danced out there on the curling, browning, buffalo grass. A lazy day, a good day for talk within the coolness of a wide lodge, with the sides rolled up a bit to let breeze through. Eagle Horse smoked with Sitting Bull and the rest of the council chiefs. The boys were out watching the horse herds, hunters had gone since dawn.

A pony pounded through the somnolent camp, came to a sliding halt outside the council lodge, and an excited voice yelled, "Hopo! Hopo! Blue-coats! They come! Hopo!"

They boiled out of the lodge, these gray-heads, with the instinctive reaction of startled wolves. They took their one sweeping look, no more than a glance, saw the glint of metal, the tell-tale blue uniforms, and then as one, they were running for their individual lodges.

Most of them kept one prized horse picketed close to the lodge, from just this long-ingrained training of survival, and Eagle Horse snatched up his lance and quiver, and caught the picket rope in one sweep of his arm. He sent his deep voice rolling through his little section of the circle, "Come out! Hopo! Soldiers!"

The camp came boiling alive. The women came running, shrieking for the children, the men running for horses, the children and dogs crossing and scrambling underfoot, in everybody's way. Eagle Horse kicked his pony about and sent him straight at the line of soldiers, hearing the brassy voice of the bugle crying at him. He slid his heavy bow out of its quiver, bent it across his thigh and strung it taut.

The soldiers were very foolish or they were afraid. In that first second of surprise they could have charged. A thundering wedge of the big heavy Army horses could have ridden straight through the camp. But they came at a walk, in a long line, and mounted Sioux came boiling

out of the camp.

The Sioux made no charges, not as a body. Single riders raced at the line of blue uniforms, loosed their shot or their arrow, wheeled across the face of the line, fell back. Time was all they wanted, time to get the women and children in the clear. They got it.

Eagle Horse had time for one pass at the soldiers before the rest of the Sioux came up. The soldiers were dismounting, fighting afoot to steady their rifles. Eagle Horse fell back and let the young ones have their chance. He saw Sitting Bull off to the side with his repeating Winchester rifle across his thighs, and rode to him.

Sitting Bull stared broodingly at the towering cloud of dust, the expanding cotton blossoms of smoke drifting with the wind, the wheeling riders charging in and out at the line of blue. "Something is not right," he said. "There is a bad smell to this."

The blue-coats were moving, angling across to a grove that sprawled by the river. Here and there one fell, but the soldiers made the timber. There was a lull while the Sioux warriors swung wide to enter the timber from another angle, and then the bugle shrilled, and the soldiers swung into their saddles and made a run for it down to the river.

The warriors were onto them like a pack of ravening wolves.

SOME OF THEM made it. They hit the cut-bank of the river, tumbled, slid, fell, somehow got across, but in a ragged undiciplined string, with the racing Sioux harrying them at the flanks. But some of them made it. They crossed the river, scrambled up the near-vertical sides of a little bluff. But some thirty blue-coats lay sprawled along the way, and more were back in the timber.

Sitting Bull sniffed the air like a hunting hound.

"The smell," he said, "the smell. I knew it was wrong! You saw them. Before they ran, they were waiting . . ." And on the heels of the words came the brass voice of another bugle, and a chorus of yelling from the Sioux across the river.

This was a bigger trap of the blue-coats. They were coming along the dusty ridge, trotting their horses, heading for the ford. The Sioux split, half of them at least, wheeling to face this new menace.

Again it was no organized charge. It was every man for himself, whipping up his pony, whimpering with eagerness to get at this new enemy, eager to be the first to strike coup, blooded now, hot with the battle. Eagle Horse put his pony at them without thought.

Age had no meaning now. This was the last stand of the Sioux. If ever they were to live with honor, this arrogant bunch of blue-coats must be whipped. He chanted his war song, straightened his back, forgot the gray streaks in his hair, and rode into battle.

Crazy Horse came angling in from the side, long black hair flying free behind him, a fixed fighting grin on his face. He flicked a look at Eagle Horse, and his mirthless grin stretched wider. He bent low on his pony's back and brought down his quirt. It was wordless, but it was a challenge.

The best man will strike first, he was saying, without using a word. Eagle Horse took the challenge.

It was dust and smoke and noise and charging horses and fighting yells. It was confusion and noise that beat a man's ears until there was nothing real but the reaching muscles of the horse under him, and the whistling of the wind in his ears. He passed one driving rider, another, and two together, and then the smoke and dust and noise was all about him, and a uniformed white man loomed up before him. His arm drew back his lance, and then a maddened pony, showing the red rims all the way around his rolling eyes, dashed in, almost shouldering into him, and Crazy Horse shouted, "Onhey! I strike this one!"

Three more strides and Crazy Horse was lost from sight as he wheeled away searching for another opponent.

Another blue-coat was before him, one who had lost his horse, who was lost, and who was almost crazed with the realization of it. His face was crusted with dust caked by his own sweat. His mouth gaped with the effort of gulping the hot air into his over-driven lungs. His eyes were wide and staring and scared, and he sighted his gun on Eagle Horse and pulled off the shot.

The slug hit him under the arm, in the thick bunched muscles of his back, and it knocked him clear off his pony. He lit on neck and shoulders, somersaulted, hard, and lay dazed while the blue-coat was coming at him, charging in afoot with the rifle clubbed, eyes still frightened and staring, mouth gaping in a soundless yell. As the clubbed rifle came down, Eagle Horse lashed out with the quirt dangling from his wrist.

The split rawhide lash hit the man's face, and the heavy wood-and-bone handle caught his crossed wrists as he grasped the rifle barrel. It was too late to stop the blow, but as it came across the back of Eagle Horse, the blue-coat's numbed hands lost his grip, and he lost his weapon. Still he came, the blue-coat, one hand out as if to fend Eagle Horse out of his way, the other clawing at the slick leather of his pistol holster.

His fingers found the short gun as the clawing fingers of Eagle Horse found the lance. Eagle Horse came up, driving the lance ahead of him, half leaping, half dragging himself forward. The lance went into the blue-coat's belly, just above the stark black line of his belt.

The blue-coat coughed and his fingers clawed at the tough shaft that protruded from his guts. He stared at Eagle Horse across the shaft, eyes getting wider and wider, and then he fell.

Eagle Horse took the trooper's short gun. His whole left side was dead. He could feel death creeping over him from that numbed side, and the same thoughtless fighting heat was on him that had been on him when he fought the Crows and was only seventeen summers old.

A HORSE CAME out of the smoke and the noise, riderless, scared, ears flattened to its skull, and automatically Eagle Horse thrust the short gun under his belt, caught the pony's trailing rope with his good arm, dragged it fighting to him, and swung up.

Straight through the blue-coats he charged alone, not afraid, not seeking glory, simply convinced that he was as good as dead and a true warrior dies fighting.

Straight through them. Fewer now, for the hungry tide that was a thousand Sioux had rolled over them. But some still stood, and into them he rode. He thumbed back the hammer of the short gun, felt its recoil clear through his body, heard the bellow of it like a blow on the ears; and he thumbed it back again, and again, and again until its cylinder was empty. Only one man stood before him on the ridge, a whip of a man with eyes blue as ice, with a yellow mustache cutting his face in two, and he threw the empty gun at this man, threw it to smash its weight into the man's chest just as the blue-coat sent his own shot at Eagle Horse. The bullet ripped past his head. The soldier was thrust aside by the charging shoulders of the pony, and then the back slope of the ridge was coming up at him, and the battle was behind and Eagle Horse was still alive.

It was too much effort to even reach for the pony's single rein. He rode automatically, thighs clenched on the animal's barrel, letting it run itself down, until it came out of its run, into a canter, a jarring trot; and that shook the pain loose, and he dragged at the rein and fell forward with the coarse mane in his face.

He did not guide it. Of its own volition the pony circled south, clear of the ruck of riders, turned back toward the river; and oh, the blessed touch of cool water!

The horse wanted to drink too much, in its heat, and he had to beat it with the rope to drive it across the river.

He did not look back. Across the river a moment in history was made. A surging wave of fighting men swept over the ridge, swept life clean off that ridge, clean as a picked bone; and men were to talk and speculate, argue and analyze that battle for a hundred years to come; but he did not look back.

Long Hair Custer, a whip of a man, driven by ambition, a scornful, fighting man, who honestly believed that the red animals would run before him; a whip of a man with ice-blue eyes and gold-yellow hair, who failed in just one way. He did not remember that free men do not submit their necks meekly to the yoke; he forgot that a free man sometimes finds death preferable to defeat.

Catfish John, the Gentle Sioux Killer

AS TOLD BY HIS FATHER TO

EDMUND NILES

INDIAN STORIES MAGAZINE takes pleasure in publishing this unusual reminiscence told by one of the early pioneers to his son. It is the story of one of the Old West's all too infrequent friendships between Red Man and White, a friendship ended only by the great Sioux massacre.

ON a June day in 1854 I was strolling about on the decks of a big side-wheel Upper Mississippi steamer, The War Eagle.

For two days and nights we had been plowing upstream from Galena, Illinois. I was a gangling boy of fourteen and with my family, consisting of my father, mother and a brother two years older than myself, had come from Maine to make a new start in the great country that was both a hope and a mystery. No railroads had then penetrated this vast domain and the only means of transportation to the North Central States of the Mississippi River Valley was by water.

And now, in response to a shore signal, the pilot gave a long, loud blast of the whistle and gently swung his boat to the high, soft bank to our left. A shore line was run out and made fast to a tree. The landing stage was put out and our family, together with our clothes and bedding, was unloaded in the woods on the Minnesota side of the river, some forty miles below a trading station at the head of navigation, later to be known as St. Paul.

As I gazed about in wonderment, I noticed three or four Indian women standing a few rods away, eying us with much curiosity, and then a sturdy Indian lad of about my age stepped into view. The lad was later to be known as Catfish John and was to be my boon companion and friend for the period of our boyhood.

A few days later, I saw the boy standing a short distance away as he watched the men working on the buildings. I wasn't very strong as a boy, and wasn't able to do much work, and so to pass the time I went over to him, and said "Hello." He grinned and grunted a weak "How." Of course, neither of us could speak a word of the other one's language. My new acquaintance had never seen but a very few white men and neither had he ever had any dealings with them—he was certainly an unadulterated, "simon-pure" Sioux Indian.

I began at once to get better acquainted as everything about the lad and his people intrigued me greatly. Father said that we had better call him John as that name would fit almost anyone. He had no name so far as we could learn. Then we started calling him Catfish John. The lakes and rivers were filled with catfish, and the boy caught lots of them, and kept us supplied also. There was another reason why he was dubbed "Catfish," and that was because his mouth was just a square-cut slash across his face and looked exactly like the mouth of a catfish. Anyhow the name stuck, and he soon learned to answer to it.

Catfish John was very shy and timid, but he took an interest in me and we became pals, without much conversation, at first.

Catfish was an expert with bow and arrows, and, as game was plentiful, he killed a fine bag every day. His bow was so stiff I couldn't bend it, but he made me one that I could use and many a fine little hunting trip did we take about the adjacent country. The Indian language isn't hard to learn because there are so few words, and it was amazing how quickly the lad picked up English, and after we had been together two years we could understand each other very well.

About a mile north of our place, there was a small Sioux camp of about a dozen families. That is where Catfish John had lived all his life.

FOR several years our freight all came up the river in summertime by boat, and in the wintertime when the river froze over, the old four-horse sled-stages went up and down once a week on the ice. After a few years hundreds of families came in and took up homesteads on the fine prairie lands to the west of us, lands that the Government had acquired from the Indians. On the Minnesota side of the river were the Sioux and on the Wisconsin side were the Chippewas. They were hostile tribes and always at war. The Sioux were a much stronger tribe, but the Chippewas were brave warriors and very clever. On several occasions we saw war parties cross the river near our place to make a dash upon their unsuspecting victims, usually returning with new scalp locks dangling from their belts.

The fifth summer was the year of the high water. The snow in the north country had fallen deep, and the warm days of spring followed by heavy rains made the Upper Mississippi a deluge of rushing water, sweeping over its banks in the low land and flooding large areas of bottom land. Our place was comparatively high, but at that we were completely surrounded by water for two weeks. We were thinking of two families that had located the year before about a mile below us, but we were sure they were on high enough ground to keep out of water and let it go at that, but we were mistaken.

A few days later, when the flood was at its highest, Catfish John came leisurely paddling his canoe up to our place. He wore a broad grin as he stepped out of his boat and came over to us.

"Big water," he commented, and indicated its depth by raising his arm. "You all right? Want anything?"

I assured him we were all right. Then, in his best English, which I could understand quite readily, especially when it was supplemented by his gesticulations, he told me that he had been hunting muskrats the day before down in the locality of the two families and decided he better go over and see them, as the water was coming up over everything. On reaching the houses, he found that the water was over the floors and rising rapidly. The men had gone away to work and the wives and three small children were there alone. They had climbed up on the beds and chairs to keep dry. He sensed the danger at once and with two trips of his canoe Catfish John carried them all to high ground and left them with another family. He went back for the clothes and bedding, and, wading through water waist-deep, he got it all and loaded it just as the house he came out of collapsed.

Of course, there was no question but that all of them would have been lost had it not been for the thoughtful young Indian with the catfish mouth. . . . I recall also, that during the remainder of the flood, Catfish John visited everybody in the settlement, bringing them fish and game in plenty.

The following winter Catfish and I were fishing in the river a short distance from our home. We had cut holes through the ice and were spearing fish with a blanket over our heads, Indian style. The four-horse stage had just passed us going down the river. The weather was quite warm and the ice was thawing in places. We all knew that in certain places of the river where the current is especially swift the ice does not freeze to such depths as it does in slack water, and when the ice begins to thaw it will usually cut out faster where the current is swifter. In fact, it was common to see small patches of open water here and there, though all around these spots the ice may be quite solid. These open places are called "air holes."

Catfish John had this to say, "Ice is bad." I could see that he was worried. As we watched the progress of the stage, the big sled swung around a bend a short distance from us. The off horse of the lead team broke through a thin layer of ice covered with snow and went down with his hind feet. His mate was jerked to his knees but was still out of the hole. The first horse was plunging and it seemed that all of the horses would be drawn in. The driver jumped out—there were no passengers—and yelled for help, but he need not to have done so as far as we were concerned, for we were already making a dash for the scene. But for the life of me I didn't know what we could do when we got there. I had seen other teams break through the ice, and almost invariably they were lost.

CATFISH JOHN grabbed up his ax as he started. The stage was perhaps 300 yards distant and I think he beat me by 50 yards. He could run like an antelope. The driver was jumping around on the ice and was both frantic and helpless. Not so with the Indian lad. He raced around the outfit and sized up the situation, here and there making a quick stroke with his ax to try the ice. The hole the horse went through was small but he was gradually pulling all the others toward it. The water was deep and the current swift.

As is usually the custom the lead team was pulling on a chain that was run through the neck yoke of the pole team and fastened to the roller on the front bob sled. In this case it was fastened by a clevice, the bolt pinned in place with a cotter key. The lines going to the lead team were fastened in the usual way by running through loops on the bridles of the pole team. With a slash of his sheath knife that he always carried in his belt Catfish John cut the lines. Then with a clip of his ax he cut off the cotter pin that held the bolt in the clevice, with another stroke knocked out the bolt—and the pole team was loose.

Taking a long chance for his own safety he seized the bridle of the off horse of the pole team and jerked him around to the right, his mate swinging with him, and they scrambled to safety, drawing the stage with them. I thought there wasn't a chance to save the lead team, but Catfish didn't agree with me.

The stage driver had a large rope that he carried coiled on the back of his rig, for any emergency that might arise. Catfish seized the rope and rushed back to the struggling horse that was still above water but nearly exhausted. Exposing himself to the great danger of being dragged in himself, the intrepid lad managed to tie an end of the rope around the neck of the horse. Then, quickly fastening the other end to the rear of the stage sled, he yelled, "Go!" The driver gave his team a clip with the lines, and the big team slid the nearly drowned horse out on the ice and to safety.

The only comment Catfish John made as we hooked up the horses was, "Too bad to cut the lines."

The stage driver swung off the ice and followed the rough timber road the rest of his way some eight miles to his stopping place.

We got no mail or freight for a month, until the first boat came up after the ice had gone out. With the first shipment of freight, I received a rather suspicious-looking package, addressed to Catfish John in my care. I made a good guess as to its contents, for I had suggested the idea to the stage driver. I think that the only time I ever saw Catfish John show any emotion about anything, other than a grin, was when he opened the bundle and found a new Sharps rifle and 100 rounds of ammunition.

During the summer Catfish told me that before he could be considered a full-fledged brave with a place in the charmed circle of the war dance, it would be necessary for him to take a few more scalps, and he was eager to make a sortie across the river. He soon found his chance.

On a scouting trip Catfish learned that a small band of Chippewas was camped about ten miles from the river. Alone, he located the camp and mapped out the best way to get there. He returned, got the warriors together in a war dance. Daubed in appropriate colors, about twenty braves quietly crossed the river the following day and hid their canoes in the brush.

A few days later, Catfish told me all about it. His strategy was to travel all that night, reach the Chippewa camp at daylight, and then make the attack. However, the brave in command decided that they would go about halfway the first night, then hide the next day, and go the rest of the distance the second night. Catfish was opposed to this plan—too much delay and too much chance of being discovered by the wily enemy. Catfish John's advice was unheeded. He was too young to be a real warrior, he was told. So the second night, under cover of darkness, the Sioux crawled up to within 200 yards of the camp and waited for daylight. Just as the morning was breaking, they moved cautiously forward toward their unsuspecting intended victims. There was no sign of life to be seen about the camp except a couple of squaws out rustling some wood near the tents.

It looked like a complete surprise, and

it proved to be just that, but the Sioux were the ones surprised. With war whoops and flashes from guns it seemed that the whole woods was alive with Chippewas. The intruders had fallen into a nicely contrived ambush, and from tree and stump, the ancient enemy of the Sioux poured in a deadly fire. Ten of the Sioux braves went down the first blast.

CATFISH then went on to relate: "We broke and tried to get away as we saw that we were outnumbered and at a great disadvantage. The clever Chippewas worked in behind us and we had to fight our way out. More of our warriors were killed and the survivors ran like scared rabbits. I had been hit by a bullet in the arm and had two knife cuts in the face. I picked my own way back alone and swam the river about five miles below. Only five of us returned. I hadn't eaten anything for two days and was lucky to get back with my own scalp."

Catfish never recovered from that disgrace. He said the Sioux so-called braves fought and ran like old squaws. So far as I know, that was the last sortie the Sioux ever made on their very alert and scrappy enemies across the big river.

I saw Catfish several times in the spring and early summer of '62, for he was over west most of the time. He told me that there had been some trouble between the whites and Indians and he was afraid that there would be an outbreak.

Before I relate the closing chapter of my friendship and association with Catfish John, I have this to say of the young Sioux who had been my constant companion for seven years—he was always kind and considerate, and I'm sure that there never was a time when he would have hesitated a moment in risking his life for any white person in our settlement. He was bound by no law and knew no moral code. With no background other than legendary lore, he was guided by the instincts of a wild and hunted animal and the lessons learned from Nature. He recognized a Supreme Being whose voice came to him in the thunder and the storm. He was fearless, unemotional, and stoical. He had a sense of duty and loyalty, but never from the hope of reward. His ambition was to be a great warrior in this life, and hence when leaving these shores he would carry on in the circle of great chiefs in a hunting paradise.

IN August of '62 the great Sioux massacre broke out, extending over several counties in the south central part of the State. I never saw Catfish John again, but he had told me that if an outbreak did occur it would probably not extend as far east as we were, but that it would be a good idea to take the women and children across the river. This we did.

We were near the scene of the outbreak and knew as well as one could of its cause, and it was not altogether the fault of the Indians. The fact was that there were a number of renegade whites working among the Indians inciting them to bloodshed.

The Civil War was on and law and order were at a low ebb. The Sioux believed that the white men were taking their lands and their buffalo, which to a certain extent was true, so it did not require much of an excuse to fan the smoldering embers into flames. Hordes of Sioux from the Dakotas joined the Minnesota tribes, and all during August and part of September the slaughter continued. Over 800 whites were killed and several hundred taken prisoner though afterwards released. Some settlers as near as twenty miles from us were massacred and their homes burned, but our settlement was not molested. We believed that Catfish John's influence saved us. The whites organized companies of militia, and the Governor sent in troops. Finally the Sioux were badly beaten in the famous battle of Wood's Lake. This was the end of what I believe was the greatest massacre in the history of the United States.

Of the Indians taken prisoner, many were placed on trial for murder, and thirty-eight were found guilty and hanged at one time at Mankato. Catfish John was one of the number executed.

So ended the life of a typical young Sioux Indian who lived when the West was young.

And now, who are we to pass judgment on this Primitive Red Man, or to presume to measure the advance of our boasted modern civilization?

COMANCHE THUNDER

By BART CASSIDY

Raised to be a Comanche brave by the painted killers of his pioneer family, young Jimmy Gallant felt the call of his heritage through a white girl's captive plea—and switched the Redskin medicine.

THE LIVE-OAK TREE, left standing when the land was cleared, grew in the center of the cornfield, and its sturdy trunk and spreading branches dominated all the clearing. Outstretched upon a great branch, Jimmy Gallant watched his brother dig. Jimmy loved to climb the live-oak. It was his own particular retreat, his sanctuary and his castle. From it he could see the cabin and the log-and-sod barn, and in it he could dream.

Bob paused on his shovel, wiped sweat from his forehead, and looked up at the boy in the tree. " 'Bout deep enough," Bob announced. "When we've gone another foot we c'n put on a roof an' cover it. Climb down, Jimmy, an' run to the house for a jug of water, will you?"

"Sure." Jimmy uncoiled on the branch. "I'll dig some when I get back. Bob, you reckon them Comanches will come yere? You reckon we'll ever use this hideout?"

"I dunno." Bob glanced speculatively at the sides of the excavation. "I dunno, Jimmy. Paw told me to make a hideout 'fore he went to the Army. I'm a-doin' it, that's all."

Jimmy slid down the live-oak's trunk. "Wonder how long it'll take Paw to whup them damyankees?" he said as he reached the ground. "I wonder when he'll be comin' back."

The year was '63 and "damyankee" was all one word in Texas. Bob, five years older than the eleven-year-old Jimmy, shook his head. "No tellin'," he answered. "I aint a-worryin' though. Paw'll whup 'em. Run git the jug, Jimmy."

Jimmy lingered. "Stagg said that Paw was crazy to join the Army," he stated.

"Stagg said that there was a power of fightin' to do right yere. He said Paw ought to stay home an' look after his own folks."

"Paw looked after us." Bob's voice was terse. "He talked to Stagg an' to Heintzlemann an' Pickerell before he left. If them Comanches come Pickerell an' them'll he'p us. An' anyhow we got this hideout."

"Yeah," Jimmy agreed.

THE CORN rustled and a man appeared. The newcomer wore shirt and jeans and his face was shaded by a battered felt hat. It was an open face, round and bearded, and the eyes were out of character: narrow-set, small, and a bright beady brown. He spat and wiped tobacco from his beard before he spoke.

"Yore mother said you'd be out here. What you doin'? Diggin' a cellar?"

Bob climbed out of the hole. "It's a hideout, Mr. Pickerell," he informed. "Paw tol' us to make it 'fore he left. We're goin' to roof it an' if them Comanches come we'll hide in it. What's Maw want, did she say?"

Bliss Pickerell squinted at the hole. "A lot of work for nothin'," he commented. "Them Comanches ain't apt to raid this far east, an' anyhow we got the Frontier Battalion to stop 'em. I brung yore Maw a letter. She wants you." Wheeling abruptly, Pickerell strode back through the waving corn.

"Wonder what was in it." Bob looked at Jimmy, his eyes worried. "Come on."

In the dogtrot between the two rooms of the cabin, Bob and Jimmy found Sarah Gallant with Pickerell and Heintzlemann. Fred Heintzlemann wore buckskin trousers and a faded calico shirt. Like Pickerell, he was full bearded, and he stared at the boys, his eyes small and blue above his predatory nose.

Sarah Gallant, holding a folded letter, sat on a puncheon bench and the boys, sensing tragedy, hurried to her.

"What is it, Maw?" Bob demanded, and reached for the letter.

His face changed as he read and, sitting down beside the woman, he put his arm across her shoulders. Sarah Gallant did not move.

What's in the letter, Bob?" Jimmy moved closer.

"Paw's dead." Bob's voice was stony, without inflection. "This yere's from Captain Varney. Paw was killed fightin' them damyankees."

For a long minute Jimmy did not move. Then, dropping to his knees, he hid his face in his mother's lap. Absently Sarah Gallant's hand reached out and rested on his head and Bob turned his hard young face to Heintzlemann and Pickerell.

"We're beholden to you for bringin' the news," he said. "We're obleeged. Now I reckon we'd better be by ourse'ves awhile."

Bliss Pickerell nodded and, with Heintzlemann following, left the dogtrot. The three in the little passageway did not lift their heads or hear the men ride away.

That night, on his straw pallet in the cabin loft, Jimmy Gallant lay quietly beside Bob. The fire was dead and the cabin dark, not with the night alone but with the thoughts within it. The boys heard their mother stirring on the bed downstairs and once a sob broke through the quiet. Bob reached out and caught Jimmy's hand and the younger boy wriggled closer.

"Bob!" he whispered.

"Shhh! What is it, Jimmy?"

"Are you goin' to take Paw's place? Are you goin' to take a crack at them damyankees?"

A long silence. Then: "I reckon not, Jimmy. I got to look after you an' Maw."

Silence again. Jimmy Gallant's free hand stole up to touch his talisman. Suspended by a buckskin thong about his neck was a small silver Saint Andrew's Cross which the first Jimmy Gallant had worn crossing the Atlantic. On its back, the engraving so worn as to be almost illegible, was his name: Jaime Gallant. A Jaime Gallant had always worn that cross; it was as much a heritage as Jimmy's black hair and blue eyes.

"Mebbe I'll git a crack at 'em sometime," he whispered. "You reckon I will, Bob?"

For a day after the letter arrived the Gallants were left alone. Then Lonzo Stagg, his wife and numerous offspring came to offer condolences. Word of Tom Gallant's death spread through the little settlement and the other neighbors followed the Staggs, bringing food, small offerings, anything they could think of to show their sympathy. Bob and Sarah and

Jimmy Gallant were grateful. But not even the death of a man could stop the work; there was continuous labor in the little clearings along Bitter Creek, and so after a week the Gallants were left to themselves once more.

Long days followed, days when Bob and Jimmy had time to finish their excavation, to roof it with poles and cover the poles with dirt, to plant corn in that dirt. In those days too, they hoed the corn and cared for the few head of scrawny cattle. They cut posts, they did many things, and Sarah Gallant, her eyes blank with inner grief, also went about her duties, cooking, sewing, churning, caring for the boys.

THE GALLANTS were not entirely deserted by their neighbors. Mrs. Stagg found time to come again, and every day Bliss Pickerell came to the clearing. He had little to say when the boys were present and Jimmy accepted the visits as friendly, but Bob older, wiser, looked at Pickerell with distrust in his eyes. He confided his apprehension to Jimmy, and the youngster stared at his brother.

"Don't you like Bliss?" he queried.

"I like him well enough . . . in his place," Bob answered shortly. "I don't like him hangin' around Maw."

Jimmy was shocked. For the first time he studied his mother when Pickerell was present. Sarah Gallant had always been a quiet woman and since Tom's death had become even more quiet; but when Bliss Pickerell came, her silence was not that of natural reserve. It seemed to Jimmy that his mother withdrew into herself in Pickerell's presence and, somehow, Jimmy was angered, not at Sarah, but at Bliss. Two months after his father's death the anger burst to flame.

Jimmy had been hunting rabbits in the timber and was returning, a bundle of limp fur in one hand, the limber stick with which he had twisted the rabbit from its hole in the other. Bob was in the field, and Jimmy, seeing Pickerell's horse beside the dogtrot, hurried along. He rounded the corner of the cabin and there in the dogtrot were Pickerell and Sarah Gallant.

"Tom's not been dead a year!" The woman's voice was fierce. "It ain't decent, Bliss Pickerell, you know it ain't. I married Tom forever, not for jest such a time as the Lord give him on earth. Let me alone!"

Pickerell moved and the woman retreated toward the end of the roofed passage. "Yo're too good lookin' a woman to live alone, Sarah," the man rasped. "You need a man an' I aim to be him. I fooled around long enough. Come here!" Sarah could retreat no further. Her shoulders were against the cabin logs and Pickerell, reaching, caught her fending hands and forced them down. She tried to jerk away and then Jimmy, rushing in, struck Pickerell's head with the stick.

The blow served only to halt the man. He held Sarah Gallant with one hand, and with the other slapped at the boy, just as he might have slapped an annoying fly. Jimmy reeled back and Pickerell snarled: "Git out, you brat." Then Bob rounded the cabin.

Bob had an armload of fodder and his corn knife. He dropped both, pausing only to see what was happening. Then, face black with his anger, he closed in.

Strong as he was, the boy could not match Bliss Pickerell. They met in the dogtrot, Bob striking the man's bearded face, Pickerell reaching for a hold. Sarah Gallant did not try to run but cowered against the wall, and Jimmy, for the moment, did not move. Bob got home a blow or two and then was caught in Pickerell's bear-like arms. The two twisted and struggled and went down, Pickerell uppermost. There was hate in the man, and no mercy. His extended fingers pushed toward Bob's eyes as Pickerell sought to gouge. Jimmy, recovering from his first shock, leaped in with the stick and the end of it, forked and split, caught in the man's beard. Jimmy's sudden attack deflected Pickerell from his purpose. He reached up to catch the stick and Jimmy, twisting and dodging, fouled the split end in the beard. Pickerell jerked and yelled, Jimmy tugged, just as he had pulled to get the rabbit from its hole. The man lunged and, in moving, freed Bob who threw him off and came up. Bob's face was white with his wrath. He scrambled to his feet, ran three swift steps and caught up the corn knife.

Sarah Gallant screamed: "No, Bob! No!"

Pickerell was free of the stick. There was a tangle of matted hair in its end and Jimmy, scurrying out of reach, waved it triumphantly. Bob advanced cat-like, the corn knife poised for swing or thrust. Bliss Pickerell saw the knife and the bunched shoulders and masklike face behind it. He had no stomach for more trouble. Wheeling, he ran from the dog-trot, caught his trailing bridle reins and flung himself into his saddle. The horse, frightened, whirled as the man mounted, and almost before Pickerell had settled into the leather, leaped away. Bob whirled the corn knife up as though to throw it, and Sarah screamed again: "No, Bob!"

The corn knife stopped, poised. Jimmy, in mid-step, his stick lifted, brought his foot down. Pickerell fought his frightened horse under control, found his stirrups and, bent low as though to avoid a thrown knife, wheeled his mount around the cabin lashing it viciously.

The thunder of hoofs receded and Bob, panting, lowered the knife.

"Did he hurt you?" the older boy demanded.

"No." Sarah Gallant shook her head. "He's gone. Bob, Jimmy, come here."

Reluctantly, his stick in his hand, young Jimmy Gallant returned from the pursuit he had begun. "I wisht I'd a had a gun," he panted as he stopped. "I wisht I'd a had it. I'd a kilt him!"

Bob, the anger seeping from him, looked at his brother, a reluctant grin spreading across his face. "You done well, Jimmy," he praised. "You done right well. Bliss Pickerell won't come back yere, I reckon."

LONG DAYS followed and Bob's prophecy was true. Neither Pickerell nor Heintzlemann came to the Gallant clearing. The boys made no mention of the trouble, nor did Sarah Gallant. Apparently no one knew of it, for the Staggs did not comment when they came visiting. The corn was laid by and the trees about the clearing began to lose their leaves. Harvest was at hand.

Jimmy and Bob, taking the cart that they used for a wagon, hitched the team and went to the field. They gathered corn, Jimmy taking the down row, and the pile of snap corn grew in the barn. On the fifth day of steady work, Bob, glancing at the loaded cartbed, grinned. "I'll unload," he said. "You stay yere an' rest a while, Jimmy."

He clucked to the horses and the cart rolled away, and Jimmy, crossing to the live-oak, climbed the rough trunk. He had not climbed the oak for a long time.

Stretched on his favorite limb he looked toward the west. There beyond the timber was a rolling open land, intriguing and secret. From that plain, so Mr. Stagg said, the painted Comanches might come, bringing fire and terror. On that plain were herds of buffalo—again according to Mr. Stagg—so great that a man might not see across them. Some day, Jimmy thought, he would see those herds and ride upon the plain.

Off to the west smoke was spiraling up. Jimmy lifted himself and sat on the branch, watching the smoke boil. Its volume was too great to come from any chimney. The boy dropped from the limb and ran through the corn.

"Stagg's is burnin'!" he yelled as he reached the clearing. "I seen the smoke."

Bob was at the barn with the cart, and Sarah Gallant appeared at the cabin door. Hastily Bob climbed the ladder resting against the side of the barn where, from the sod roof, he had a view across the trees. "It's Stagg's, all right," he called. "There's somebody comin' for help." As he climbed quickly down, Sarah turned and ran back toward the house.

"We'll have to go," she called. "Get the buckets an' them old cowhides in the barn."

"Get the buckets, Jimmy," Bob ordered. "We'll take the wagon."

Jimmy ran toward the house to get buckets. He was halfway there when a lathered horse, a wild-eyed Negro astride its bare back, tore into the yard. The Negro was Lonzo Stagg's Noah. As he flung himself down, the horse galloped on across the clearing to enter the timber.

"Injuns!" Noah yelled. "Comanches! They's a-comin'!"

Jimmy dropped the empty buckets and Bob ran from the barn while Sarah Gallant appeared at the cabin door. "They kilt Mr. Stagg," Noah gasped. "Kilt Miz Stagg an' th' chillun, too. I seen 'em. I wuz down b'low de house in de fiel'. Ah grabbed mah horse an' come. They's head-

in' yere!"

Bob's face was white as he turned toward the horses still hitched to the cart. "Get Maw, Jimmy!" he rasped. "You make for the hideout."

Sarah, carrying the rifle, horn and bullet pouch, came from the cabin. Bob bent to unhook the tugs and turn the team loose. He would give them at least a chance to get away.

Jimmy took the rifle and ammunition from his mother. Noah, panting, had not yet recovered breath. Sarah Gallant ran into the house again and returned with an armload of bedding and a little bundle. Bob gave the horses a cut with the lines and the startled team ran toward the timber.

"We won't all go together," Bob said coolly. "We'd make too many tracks that way. Everybody go into the corn at a different place. Lead out, Jimmy! Show Noah where to go."

Jimmy seized the Negro's hand and tugged. "Come on," he urged.

As Bob had directed, they went into the corn, each from a different vantage point. Jimmy led Noah, the Negro, following frightened but trusting white folks to save him. They met at the entrance to the hideout and Bob ordered his mother, Jimmy, and Noah inside. When they were hidden he worked swiftly, piling cornstalks over the hole and brushing out the tracks they had made. Then he, too, crept into the opening and pulled the corn in place over it. There, huddled together in the little cellar, with only the light that seeped through the corn to cheer them, they waited.

IT SEEMED to Jimmy that they waited forever. He grew impatient with the waiting, fidgeting, moving so that the others were uncomfortable. Bob spoke to him harshly, bidding him be still.

"Mebbe they ain't comin', Bob," Jimmy urged. "Mebbe they went down the creek. Let me get out an' look."

"No!" Bob rasped.

"I c'n climb the live-oak," Jimmy argued. "I could see if they was comin'." He twisted away from Bob's hand and eluding his mother's grasp, crawled up through the opening. Outside the hideout he replaced the disturbed corn and running the short distance to the live-oak, shinnied up, his progress causing a rasping sound against its harsh bark. Most of the leaves had fallen from the oak but in a fork mistletoe grew in profusion, and among the growth Jimmy paused.

He could see the cabin, could see, too, the smoke that still came from Stagg's burning cabin. As he watched, two men rode into the opening beside the Gallant cabin, and paused. Jimmy recognized them as Pickerell and Fred Heintzlemann. The riders skirted the cabin, riding all around it, and Jimmy called down to the waiting Bob.

"Pickerell an' Heintzlemann come to the house. They're ridin' around it. They're comin' here, Bob. They're headed this away."

He heard Bob's rasping curse. "The damned fools. They'll leave tracks a blind man could follow." Jimmy lost the reasoning of that statement in what he saw next. "Here they come!" he yelped. "Here come the Injuns!"

A man riding a pinto horse had appeared in the clearing and Heintzlemann and Pickerell were coming through the tall corn. They stopped under the live-oak, directly in front of the hideout, and Bob shouted at them.

"Go on! Go on, you fools! You'll lead them right to us!"

There were more men in the clearing about the cabin now. Some rode aimlessly, like ants on a disturbed nest, while others, dismounting, disappeared into the cabin and the log barn. A wisp of smoke rose from the barn.

"They're burning the hay, Bob," Jimmy called. "I'm comin' down. I . . ."

"Stay up there," Bob yelled. "For God's sake, Pickerell, go on. Don't bring 'em down on us. My mother's in here."

Jimmy tore his eyes from the now burning barn and looked down. Pickerell and Fred Heintzlemann had not moved. There was a vicious, wicked grin on Pickerell's face and he was lifting his rifle from across his thighs.

"Mebbe yore mother's too good for me!" Pickerell rasped. "Mebbe you think I wanted yore damned cabin an' this cornland. Damn you, I did want it. We'll see if she likes a Comanche brave better'n she liked me!"

The rifle was at his shoulder. It spoke, smoke gouting from the muzzle, the report a flat, whiplike crack, and instantly at the cabin a man yelled, high, sharp and fierce, and the milling horses checked in their aimless circles. Jimmy heard Pickerell's harsh laugh, cold as a knife blade. The two men galloped off through the field, making toward the timber, and through the corn came the Comanches, a man on a pinto horse in the lead. Bob, thrusting the loose stalks aside, crawled out of the hole, the long rifle in his hand.

"Damn you, Pickerell. Damn you for a murderin' coward!" Bob shouted, and flinging the rifle to his shoulder, fired toward the approaching savages.

A paint horse went down but the rider, torso and shoulders bare, legs covered by buckskin leggings, flung himself clear. Something hissed and Jimmy saw an arrow protruding from Bob's broad chest. Bob swung the rifle and a painted brave fell, but his fellows swarmed in. Jimmy heard his mother's shrill scream, the deep, frightened bass of Noah, and then a wave of brown, painted bodies swept past beneath the live-oak, and in the mistletoe the boy hid his eyes against his arms while yells, triumphant and taunting, rose to his ears. He heard his mother's agonized shriek, heard Bob's hoarse yell, then almost as swiftly as it had begun, the yelling ceased. Below the boy in the tree voices sounded, strangely calm after the pandemonium that had raged.

FOR SOME TIME Jimmy Gallant did not lift his head, then slowly it came up and he could see what lay below him. There were ten or twelve men there, three or four mounted, the others on foot. Bob lay on top of the hideout, his shirt torn open, a gaping wound in his chest. As Jimmy watched with fascinated eyes, a brave put his foot against Bob's body and tugged out an arrow. Noah lay a little distance from Bob, black face uppermost. A Comanche walked to the Negro, kicked the body with a moccasined foot, and then turned callously away. Jimmy tearing his eyes from Noah, looked at Bob again. The brave who had pulled out the arrow was bent above the body and as he straightened Jimmy saw that something black dangled from his hand.

Jimmy searched for his mother and failed to find her. The brave who had scalped Bob walked toward the tree and the boy cowered. The Indian spoke and all the men laughed; then Jimmy, looking down to where the Commanche had stopped, saw Sarah Gallant.

Her face, upturned toward the sky, was calm. Just so had Sarah Gallant looked to her son many a time in these days since word of her husband's death. The eyes were blank, looking into some far distance. Only the bloody front of her dress proclaimed that life had been torn from her, and that was obscured as the Comanche bent over her. Now Jimmy saw broad, bronzed, muscular shoulders. The Comanche's arms moved and Jimmy could see the knife glint in his hand.

In Jimmy's pocket was his dearest possession and treasure; a genuine Barlow knife. It had but a single blade and that had been broken and resharpened to a point. Without volition, Jimmy's knife came into his hands and his voice rose in a shrill yelp of anger, of sheer fighting rage. With the knife open he dropped like a plummet, striking squarely on the broad shoulders.

The Comanche was startled. He jerked erect and the single blade of the Barlow knife raked across his back, leaving a long and shallow wound. The Comanche shook himself, dislodging the kicking, squawling, striking boy. One swift blow he gave, fortunately with the hand empty of his knife. Jimmy, caught by the sweep of open hand, was hurled away and struck against the tree with his head. He was unconscious when he reached the ground.

It was, perhaps, as well. The brave followed like a cat, his knife raised to finish what his open hand had begun. But another moved, a squat, powerfully-shouldered Indian, deep chested as a mustang. He interposed himself between the prone boy and his raging fellow, one hand held out to ward off his companion, his right hand resting on the haft of his knife. And as he shoved against the angry Commanche, this man spoke a word.

Jimmy's assailant checked. Perhaps it was the word, perhaps the command of presence, of heavy shoulders, of ready knife hand. For whatever reason, he hesitated, and in that hesitation Jimmy Gallant

was saved. From the west near the burning cabin, a yell came, a high wavering call with something of warning in it. Instantly the savages ran to their horses. The brave who had stopped the knife wielder stooped, lifted Jimmy as a man might scoop up a sack of flour, and running to his horse threw the boy across the high front of the wooden saddle. A bound, and he was in place. Now they rode, silently, each for himself and yet in loose order, and as they rode, Jimmy Gallant dangled head and feet across a wooden saddle, held in place by a broad hand that rested on his back. Mounted double on another horse, a fiercely painted savage flung a wicked look at the boy and his rescuer. So the Comanches entered the timber and were gone.

Half an hour later Bill Golson, fifty years old and already known as Cranky Bill along the Border, led a little party of Rangers into the Gallant clearing. There were few of the men—not as many as Comanches in the raiding party—but already the repute, the fighting valor of this first organization of Texans had spread across the plains. The men sat their horses wordlessly watching the burning logs. Bill Golson's eyes swept the ground, studying the sign. Now he turned his horse and rode toward the corn, and the others followed. They went through the field, following the rows as though they would not trample and disturb this crop, the harvesting of which would never be complete. By the live-oak they stopped.

Each man viewed the spot where Bob Gallant had made his fight, each man drew his own conclusions. Bill Golson dismounted stiffly.

"Darkey come to warn 'em," he rasped. "Didn't git yere in time. Or mebbe he did. Wonder why Gallant didn't stick in his hideout. They never would of found him if he had."

A man drawled: "They didn't scalp the Negro."

"They generally don't," Bill Golson answered, and looked toward the sky. "Clay," he ordered, "see can you find a shovel at the house. I reckon we'll bury 'em right yere. We couldn't go much farther tonight nohow."

A man rode off through the corn and another said, "Who was it, Bill? Lovato, do you reckon?"

"Yeah," said Bill Golson. "I reckon it was Lovato's band. But look: yere's the tracks of shod horses."

II

THE COMANCHES were camped on a creek, their lodges set in an irregular pattern beneath a cut bank that served for shelter and windbreak. This was the winter camp and every squaw had pitched her tepee as experience and fancy dictated. But the cottonwoods were beginning to bud and the winter encampment was almost over. In a cove of the stream the smoke-blackened twelve-skin lodge of Bigote merged with the dark bank, and in the doorway of the lodge El Gato sunned himself.

El Gato: The Cat. The boy was supple as a cat and had the cat tribe's long rippling muscles. His hair was as black as that of any Indian and his skin as bronzed. Only his eyes, scanning the creek, were a brilliant icy blue, and upon his broad chest, suspended by a buckskin thong, hung a small silver Saint Andrew's Cross.

SIX YEARS had changed Jimmy Gallant into El Gato. His dress was that of a Comanche, seatless buckskin breeches, a breech clout, a cloth band for his black hair that hung braided over his shoulders, a buckskin shirt to wear when the weather was cold, moccasins on his feet. His speech was the Comanche tongue, or the bastard Spanish even more common upon the llano. His habits, too, were Comanche; he was as dirty as the rest, and as casual, as willing to accept famine as feast, cold as heat. He could ride anywhere and everywhere upon a horse, shoot the powerful, stubby buffalo bow, wield a lance, handle a lasso. His humor was the broad and vulgar humor of the Indian, and his thoughts were Indian . . . almost.

The transition from Jimmy Gallant to El Gato had begun soon after his capture. At first, a frightened, bewildered boy, he had cowered in the tepee of his captor. Then, when he was not killed, when he was not even hurt, when he learned that rough kindness was his treatment, the fierce spirit that had made him fight and

so win himself a respite from death began to evince itself. He tried to escape, was caught and brought back but not punished. Rather, a watch was set upon him. Every warrior, squaw, child and dog in the camp seemed to be a self-appointed guardian and, far from being stupid, Jimmy Gallant relaxed, waiting for a better time.

Bigote, Jimmy Gallant's self-appointed father, was a noted warrior second only to Lovato, the chief. As the son of such a man, the boy had privileges. Bigote had been struck by Jimmy's fearlessness; he was jealous of Lovato, and for those reasons he had saved Jimmy's life. So, as the band moved out upon the *llano*, Jimmy was watched but not held in rigorous captivity.

No normal healthy boy can brood forever. The deaths of Bob and Sarah Gallant had made a mighty impression, but deep as that impression was, Jimmy gradually relaxed. He did not forget, but age and environment both played a part and he began to follow the pattern of his new life. At first he was a curiosity among the other boys, and then as he became familiar, he was treated as a fellow, taking part in their sports and games. Naturally endowed, he rapidly excelled in these pastimes and, quick witted, he learned the dual languages rapidly. So it was that in months and then years, the name Jimmy Gallant became submerged in El Gato—submerged but not forgotten.

Bigote was good to his adopted son, and as the boy became more proficient, he grew proud of him. Bigote's squaws accepted the boy and loved him, for the love of an Indian woman is well mixed with possession and they cannot resist a child. The other members of the band accepted him as Bigote's son. For Bigote and the squaws Jimmy held a mild affection and for his companions in play, a certain tolerance. But the chief motivation of his life was hate. He had an inherent capacity to hate well, and the savages with whom he lived were excellent haters—none better upon the plains. Lovato was the object of his hate, Lovato and all things that were Lovato's, for Jimmy Gallant would never forget that Lovato had killed his brother and his mother.

There were other names that he associated with Lovato: Bliss Pickerell and Fred Heintzlemann. Jimmy Gallant had forgotten his English but daily he repeated those four words and, adopting the philosophy of his captors, associated them with his living. They were a part of his medicine, like the Saint Andrew's Cross. The Comanches believed in an Above One and in evil spirits. To Jimmy Gallant the Saint Andrew's Cross represented the beneficient and benign, and Pickerell and Heintzlemann were simply names for his own, personal devils.

Lovato kept the hatred stirred. He was jealous of Bigote and so, of course, of Bigote's son. The white scar across Lovato's shoulders was a constant reminder of a scalp that had not been taken, and an injury unavenged. Lovato dared not openly attack the boy but there were things that he could do. He called Jimmy "Tejano" or "Gringo," terms of contempt, and he lost no opportunity to offer slight. Recently Lovato had thought of other measures, for El Gato's bright blue eyes, burning a flame of hate, were a constant menace, and El Gato was growing to manhood. Lovato was uneasy.

SHIFTING so that the sun struck his right side, El Gato lifted his arm and examined the scratch across his ribs. Yesterday, stalking an antelope, an arrow had hissed and only quick movement had prevented the scratch from becoming a mortal wound. The arrow belonged to Moyah, but Moyah had not been on the hunt. El Gato considered those men who had hunted antelope. There had been some friends, there had been some enemies, chief among these Negrito, Lovato's son. El Gato favored Negrito as the man who had shot the arrow, but he had no proof. He grunted his contempt at the raw, red scratch and lowered his arm.

In the tepee voices sounded, then Bigote emerged and set down with a grunt. Bigote. The name, which meant "Whiskers," was apt, for of all the band only Bigote might have grown a beard. His grandmother had been a full-blooded Mexican stolen from a plaza on Rito Tecolote, and the beard that Bigote's squaws assiduously plucked from his face was her heritage. Recently the squaws had another task. El Gato had a sprouting beard and this they painfully removed with tweezers made

from the shells of a fresh-water mussel.

Neither man spoke for a time. In the camps of the plains tribes there was no reticence, the stolid, sullen Indian turning that face only to strangers. Among themselves the Indians were vivacious and talkative. Bigote and El Gato did not speak simply because they had nothing to say. Five young girls chaperoned by one woman came down the creek, laughing and looking at the men as they passed the tepee. Their flirtation was as much for Bigote, who had three squaws, as for El Gato who had none. Bigote grinned at the girls and spoke to his son, for so he considered this blue-eyed boy.

"Moyah's daughter is a woman," he commented.

El Gato, slipping his knife from its sheath, played with it idly.

"I have enough ponies," Bigote said, apropos of nothing apparently. "You can have twelve."

"She is not worth twelve ponies," El Gato stated, and the knife blade flashed as he tossed the weapon and adroitly caught it.

Bigote chose another tack. It was time for this youth, his son, to build a lodge. Bigote's tepee was crowded; his youngest wife was not too young and he was flirting with the idea of taking another squaw himself.

"Negrito wants her," Bigote stated.

El Gato's face darkened at the name. Negrito had already established a lodge and had one squaw. If Negrito wanted Moyah's daughter there might, perhaps, be something there to interest El Gato.

"I don't care," El Gato grunted.

The sun was going down but the cut bank caught the last of its warmth and reflected it. Bigote got up and went into the lodge. El Gato stared at the creek. Negrito, the blackness that gave him his name apparent, walked along the stream, following the old women and the girls. El Gato scowled when Negrito looked at him.

The sun disappeared and the boy, rising, went into the smoke-blackened tepee. An iron pot stewed on the fire and El Gato helped himself. The Comanches ate when they were hungry, not at a fixed time, and Bigote had already stoked his massive belly. He grinned when, having finished eating, El Gato picked up a blanket and went out into the dusk. El Gato was going courting and Bigote was satisfied. Last year, in the fall hunt, the boy had moved to the lodge of the Dog Soldiers set in the center of the village. He was a brave. Now, after he had taken a squaw and set up his own lodge, after he had accompanied Bigote or Lovato or one of the other older men, on a raid or two against the Lipans or the Kiowa, after he had been blooded, he would take his proper place. Bigote was proud of El Gato; perhaps, even, he loved the boy. He smoked a pipe, lumbered to his feet and went out. There was some talk of an eastern raid before the spring hunt. There was sure to be a game of bones or of the rawhide cards that the Comanches favored and that they had adopted from the Mexicans; certainly there would be something to while away the time. With the men gone the squaws hurried in doing those few things necessary. They, too, knew that the winter camp was almost over and that they must make the most of their time before the unrequiting labor of the summer began.

El Gato sought a vantage point nearby Moyah's lodge, and lying down, pulled the blanket over his legs. There were other young braves lying out from the lodges but etiquette demanded that no one see them. The older men and the women disregarded the blanketed shapes. El Gato waited.

A girl came out of Moyah's tepee and walked toward the creek. Instantly a blanketed shape sprang up to seize her. The girl squealed and, as custom dictated, the brave let her go, for no girl could be courted unless she wished. As the brave slunk off, vagrant light from the lodge fire caught his face. It was Negrito. The girl came on toward El Gato. She paused and El Gato, throwing his blanket aside, reached for her. She offered no resistance.

They sat together, the blanket covering them both. This was the prescribed manner of courting. El Gato touched the girl's shoulders and Moyah's daughter rubbed her cheek against his. Her hair was greasy; the cheek was greasy too. In El Gato, Jimmy Gallant came to life and something, perhaps the fastidiousness of his heritage, made him recoil. Offended,

Moyah's daughter sprang up, throwing off the blanket, and stalked back toward the tent, every movement showing her slighted dignity. El Gato gathered up his robe and walked toward Bigote's lodge.

IN THE MORNING, having slept late, Bigote set about certain preparations. He broached the object of these to his son. There was time before the spring hunt for a raid. The buffalo had not yet come up from the south and there was time to move east and return. Lovato was going and so, Bigote thought, was he. He did not suggest that El Gato accompany the raiders, and had Bigote's adopted son expressed such a desire it would not have been granted. El Gato might hunt buffalo; he might, in time, go north to raid the Utes or the Kiowa or the Lipans, but he would never be allowed to accompany an eastern raiding party. The Comanches did not forget and they believed that El Gato had not forgotten. They were right. Jimmy Gallant, El Gato, was still watched although the surveillance was light.

Having listened to Bigote express his intentions, El Gato shook his head. His dreams, he said, were bad and they included Bigote. Immediately interested, Bigote asked questions and, being answered, reached a sudden decision. The imaginary dreams El Gato described were so malignant that Bigote decided against accompanying the chief.

There were twenty families in the village and of these, seven followed Bigote, bound to him by relationship, blood ties, or friendliness. Bigote's decision was the decision of all of these. Normally all followed Lovato but Bigote's dreams were bad. They would not go. Lovato heard the decision and scowled, for it cut his force almost in half. Someone must stay to care for the horses and the small herd of cattle, but Lovato had counted on Bigote's men. He mulled a question in his mind and he, too, reached a decision. Negrito must stay with the village, and so Lovato's interest would be protected.

To the plans and preparations El Gato paid no heed. His courtship had failed, the brief moments under the blanket with Moyah's daughter had brought back much that had lain dormant in the boy. Memory, quiescent, was stirring, and the old recollections tormented him. Where he had been content he was now dissatisfied, and the desire to escape was strong. Brooding, he took a horse and rode off by himself, seeking solitude on a knoll that, rock capped, rose above the plain and the creek. From the crown of the knoll he saw Lovato and his followers ride toward the east.

There was quiet in the camp after Lovato's departure. The usual small activities progressed, the youngsters scouted the country, already stripped, for the "small deer," the gophers, rabbits, and birds that furnished part of the food supply. They ran races on their ponies and they bragged and boasted. The men loafed, gambled and smoked. The squaws worked, gambled and smoked, and the young bucks —those that were left—pursued their courtships. Now, when Moyah's daughter left the lodge at night she did not squeal and kick when Negrito rose up from his hiding place and caught her. They sat together under Negrito's blanket.

Perhaps the girl encouraged the emnity, perhaps, under the blanket, she whispered to Negrito. At any rate the animosity between Negrito and El Gato became more and more pronounced. It came to an edge and El Gato welcomed it. When Negrito scowled he answered with a scowl, when Negrito taunted him with cowardice El Gato answered that Negrito had also stayed in camp. The old men watched the growing quarrel, taking no part for it was not their business. The young men took sides and even those of families who followed Bigote, favored Negrito. El Gato had never been really a friend, never really a Comanche. In words and looks and living he was one of them but still he was an alien and no man or boy, woman or girl in all the camp could meet and stare down those blue eyes.

The open break came at a game of knuckle bone. Negrito had the bone and, having passed it from one hand to the other with marvelous swiftness, held his clenched fists out to El Gato. El Gato gestured to the right hand and, chagrined, Negrito opened his fingers to expose the bone. The point was El Gato's and the game was won, but Negrito was not satisfied. He had bet a package of red ochre on the outcome and now he threw down

the bone angrily. "You cheat!" he snarled.

The game was really a contest between quickness of player's hand and opponent's eye, and cheating was impossible. Too, there was no particular opprobrium connected with the accusation. It was smart to cheat, a laughing matter if it could be done undetected. But in El Gato, Jimmy Gallant came to life. A white man accused of cheating is angry. Negrito snatched up the stake he had wagered and El Gato reached for his knife.

The two came to their feet, snarling like fighting dogs. Negrito whipped out his knife and jumped at his adversary, ready to strike. El Gato's hand came from his waist empty of a weapon. His knife was in Bigote's lodge, left there by sheer carelessness. Apparently he was defenseless.

Indians scuffle and wrestle in their play but they have no knowledge of fists. It was sheer instinct that clenched El Gato's hands, a harking back to the days before he had come to the Comanches. He struck, awkwardly but powerfully, first left, then right, and the blows, crashing against Negrito's chest thrust him back. Again Negrito came unreasoning, and again the fists swung, more readily now. El Gato, all Jimmy Gallant at the instant, put shoulder and powerful back into the blows. When his right went home he was a straight line from tip of toe to fist, and Negrito, struck squarely on the jaw, went down as from a lightning bolt. His eyes rolled until the whites were exposed and his breath came shallowly. Negrito had been knocked out as truly as any prize fighter in the ring.

It was now El Gato's privilege to finish the fight. Negrito's knife lay at hand, ready and waiting to be snatched up and brought down in one swift stroke that would end the enmity once and for all. But the white man was still uppermost. El Gato turned on moccasined heel and, disregarding the package of ochre, heedless of the other players, of the older men looking on, strode away.

Bigote had seen the whole thing. Like the other oldsters he had not interfered, but that evening he counseled his adopted son. "Negrito's heart is bad for you," Bigote warned. "He will kill you if he can. Why didn't you kill him?"

El Gato shook his head, and it was El Gato, not Jimmy Gallant, who answered, *"Quien sabe?"*

IN THE DAYS that followed, El Gato watched Negrito and because the watching was necessary, the boy became even more lonely and preoccupied. Negrito, harboring hatred and a desire for revenge, was one not to be taken lightly. He was older than Jimmy Gallant, he had stolen horses from the Kiowa and had taken two scalps. But he was afraid of an unarmed man who could strike him down, and he was afraid of the boy's blue eyes. Negrito maneuvered for a favorable opportunity and while he so waited, Lovato returned.

The raiders came back to the camp by Alamo Creek, firing their few firearms with a woeful waste of powder, yelling and brandishing their weapons. They had been sucessful in the three weeks of their adventure, for they drove a herd of cattle, and when the village poured out to meet them, another evidence of success was apparent. Lovato led a bay pony bearing a white woman on its back. She was a girl, really; slump shouldered, frightened, staring at all this savage exultance and panoply with wide gray eyes. Lovato pulled her from the bay and hustled her toward his tepee where his squaws took her in charge. It was no novelty among the Comanches to capture slaves. They had taken many from the Mexicans in Neuvo Mejico and Viejo Mejico, and, too, they had snatched captives from the Texas settlements—women generally, although they did not despise young boys or girls. Gale Baylor, barely turned fifteen, was pushed and shoved and scrutinized until she almost welcomed the smoke-begrimed squalor of Lovato's lodge. But even here she had no privacy. Men and women, boys, girls, mere children, appeared at the door or stalked into the tepee to stare at her.

For the most part these curious savages were typical: short, muscular and stocky, many with bowed legs. But there was one tall stripling different from all the rest. He appeared at the tepee door, hesitated, and stepped in, and the girl, glancing at him, was roused from her apathy and fright. The man's eyes were blue as icy water in a lake, and his face lacked the

high Mongoloid cheekbones and the coppery patina of his fellows. True, he was tanned to darkness, but here was a white man. The girl flung herself forward, caught the man about the knees and stared up at him. "Help me!" she pleaded. "You're a white man. Help me."

For an instant El Gato was startled into inaction. He stared down at the girl and rasped a question: *"Que dice?"* What do you say? Then, recovering, he pulled free from her desperate grasp and strode away.

Outside the tepee El Gato moved more slowly, the girl's words echoing in his mind. Their sound was familiar but he did not understand them. Long disuse had dimmed his English until words held no meaning. But her attitude, the girl's wide, tear-filled, frightened eyes, the ring of her voice, interpreted her plea. El Gato went to Bigote's lodge and sat down to think.

There was a scalp dance that night. A pole was placed in a clear spot among the lodges and on it were hung the scalps that had been taken on the raid. There was much strutting and boasting, each warrior recounting in detail what he had done, how brave he had been. Any man could take part in the dance; it was not necessary to have taken one of these fresh scalps or to have stolen one of the newly acquired horses or any of the cattle. Any brave could leap out into the cleared space, could dance, could enact past exploits and boast of them or even of exploits far in the future. Negrito, entering the space beside the fire, bragged of his prowess, of how he had killed his enemies. Negrito's eyes were focused on El Gato.

Lovato took a turn. A powerful, bandy-legged figure with tasseled lance and bull-hide shield in hand, he circled the ring, vaunting his exploits, enlarging and widening upon them. But Lovato had not been too successful upon this most recent raid. He had taken no scalp, and perhaps because of that he chose to hark back to another time, to a greater victory.

LOVATO stamped his feet and pounded with his lance, he lifted the shield high and his voice rang with bombast as he recounted an exploit, how he, Lovato, had led a band of braves farther east than most men dared to raid; how he had burned cabins and stolen cattle, how he had followed two men who fled from him, and how those two men had led him to others. Feet shuffling, Lovato described his wary approach; body erect and vivid with life, he told of the man who, rising up, had shot his horse, how he had killed that man with an arrow and taken his scalp, how he had killed the man's woman and taken her scalp. He shook the shield and the scalps fringing it danced in the firelight. Lovato whirled to face El Gato. His eyes were wild and his voice shrill as he spoke of the Negro he had killed, of the coups he had counted. At the edge of the light, El Gato stood rigid and from his mind the savagery sloughed away, leaving only horror.

What might have happened is impossible to say. The long cat muscles on the boy's back and shoulders bunched and his thighs tightened. He was ready to leap, his hand on his knife, but Bigote forestalled him. Bigote, who had killed the black man. He, Bigote, had stolen horses and cattle; he, Bigote, had come scatheless from the raid, whereas Lovato bore a scar all across his shoulders. Bigote's voice was as big as his belly and he drowned out Lovato's shriller tones. Lovato, sullen because attention had been snatched from him, retreated from the firelight where Bigote bellowed and bragged, and Jimmy Gallant, releasing his knife haft, stole away toward the blackness beyond the fire.

THE BAND camped beside the creek a few more days. Now there was a tiny ear-like leaf on the cottonwoods and spring had fully come. Then one morning there was a great to-do as the tepees came down and were loaded upon *travois*. *Parflesches*, empty after the winter months, were packed in place. The dogs barked, the men—labor beneath their dignity—waited until preparations were complete and then they moved, all of them, the *travois* poles riding the grass newly green with spring, the men and boys driving the horses and the herd of cattle.

Progress was leisurely toward the west. They gleaned food as they moved, gophers, an occasional jack rabbit, an antelope. They struck a few straggling buffalo and feasted on hump, boss ribs, marrow bones and tongue. They watered at trickling creeks that, when summer came, would

be dry stream beds; they found their way across a trackless wilderness with ease.

At night camp was made and flameless, almost smokeless, fires of buffalo chips burned bright. The Indians loafed and played about the camp; the young men courted, the girls giggled, enjoying the one interval of their lives when they were free from labor and when they had their suitors at their feet. Jimmy Gallant followed in the long trek, taking his place with the pony herd, doing what he had to do. At a distance he saw the white girl that Lovato had taken, always under the surveillance of one of Lovato's squaws, working as the older women worked, doing the hard manual labor of the camp. He never got near her, never got to speak to her. Hopefully he took his blanket and approached Lovato's lodge, lying out from it at night as was the suitor's custom. The white girl never came from the lodge.

After dusk had fallen, Bigote, seeing the nature of affairs, spoke to his son. "You want the white girl?"

El Gato nodded. "I want her."

Bigote said no more on the subject, but through an old friend, made advances to Lovato.

"Lovato wants her himself," Bigote later reported to his adopted son. "He would take her but Ca-ho-pa screams and kicks at him."

El Gato got small consolation from the fact. Ca-ho-pa was Lovato's oldest squaw, a wrinkled, bedizened hag with a tongue like a whiplash, and she could not hope to hold out long against the man's desire.

At length the journey ended on the bank of a clear running stream where old signs spoke of many camps made and deserted. This was Mucho Que, a familiar site, a trading spot. For two days the Comanches waited and on the evening of the third day a boy came yelling into camp, while men and women ran to the creek bank and peered toward the west. Dots moved on the plain, a line of them following the wheel ruts that led to the creek bank. The Comancheros, traders from Neuvo Mejico, were coming.

Eight carretas were in the caravan, four oxen and four men to each. The ungreased wooden axles made a cacophony of screeches as the vehicles drew up on the creek's western bank. The mounted men with the carts wore wide flat sombreros and more than one had a gun looped to his shoulder, while others carried lances or bows. They made a brave show in their leather as they rode to the creek. One, carrying a small keg, splashed through the ford, and Lovato, as was his right, went to meet the trader. Greetings were exchanged.

"Como esta, amigo? Como esta?"

"Bien, bien. Como 'sta tu? Tiene aguardiente?"

Old Rafael Tafoya hid his grin behind his bushy beard. Lovato's first question had been of brandy. This band of Comanches was fresh from the plains, they had many cattle and horses, no taste of brandy for a long time, and the trading would be good.

"Seguro que si!" Tafoya answered heartily and passed over the keg.

Lovato wasted very little time in diplomacy. He grunted his thanks and, lugging the keg, headed for his lodge. Bigote and others, the most influential and seasoned warriors of the band, followed their chief. The first liquor was not for the small fry, and these, with the women, the young men, and the children, hung along the bank of the creek and stared across at the Comancheros' camp.

It did not take long for Lovato and his companions to dispose of the keg. Emerging from his lodge with his followers the chief returned to the creek. All had partaken of the brandy but none were drunk; their thirsts were merely whetted. Tafoya came down to the creek and Lovato called across: *"Mas aguardiente."* ..

"No mas ahora," Tafoya answered. *"Manana, si."*

With that promise, Lovato was apparently content.

Sundown came and with it dusky shadows. Fires burned by carretas and tepees alike. As night fell some of the young men slipped across the creek and El Gato was of their number. They lay in the tall dead grass just outside the circle of carts, and stared curiously at the men within the circle. The Comancheros had posted guards and these, too wise to walk about and expose themselves, crouched in the carts' shadows.

WITHIN THE CIRCLE the Comancheros, but little removed from

savages themselves, made ready for the night, fully aware of the curious eyes that studied them. El Gato singled out one young man who was, it seemed, different from the rest. His leather shirt and trousers were new, not stained by grease and smoke, and his face was clean-shaven save for a wisp of mustache. Hardly older than El Gato himself, the young man was deferred to by Tafoya. The Comanchero leader seemed to fawn upon him. El Gato was impressed.

Tafoya had calico, iron pots, strap iron for arrow points, powder, panoche, knives, a variety of articles all dear to savage hearts or bellies. The Comanches had cattle, horses, a small quantity of gold looted from the Texas settlements, and too, the Indians had robes tanned and smoked. Brandy lubricated the trading. Tafoya dealt it out sparingly, having brought very little brandy with the carts. Wise to the ways of the savage, he had made a cache and when the trading was done would direct Lovato to it. In that manner the Comancheros might hope to make good their escape with the cattle and horses they gained in the exchange. Otherwise the Comanches, finally realizing that they had traded for what they might have taken, would recapture the stock.

The squaws were instrumental in the trading. True, it was the bucks who strode across the stream and made the gestures, but the squaws were shrilly vociferous as to their wants and there was many a piece of gaudy calico taken in trade, and many an iron cooking pot changed hands where the brave would have preferred panoche or aguardiente.

El Gato watched the trading. He had nothing of his own to exchange and while he watched he held himself aloof. There was another who was in the trading but not of it: the smooth faced young Mexican. It was inevitable that the two drift together beyond the trading spot.

The two young men eyed each other and the Mexican started with surprise when he saw the blue eyes. *"Tejano?"* he demanded.

El Gato bristled. *Tejano!* That was Lovato's term of contempt, and El Gato's hand shot to his knife. The Mexican grinned a friendly grin and pushed a finger at his own chest. *"Yo soy Miguel Alcazar,"* he announced. *"Como se llama?"*

"El Gato." Jimmy Gallant tried to make his voice deeply guttural and the hand on the knife relaxed.

"El Gato," Miguel repeated, and followed with another question. Where had El Gato come from? He was so interested, so obviously transparent, that El Gato could not be stolid faced. Within ten minutes the two were talking. Each learned a great deal about the other, but Jimmy Gallant received a much clearer picture than that he painted for Miguel.

Miguel Alcazar was the son of Don Fernando Alcazar of Sante Fe. His father was a merchant and he, Miguel, had come on this expedition as an adventure. Tafoya bought goods from Don Fernando and because of the connection had consented to take the Don's son upon the plains to show him the workings of the trade, and too, to convince him that the dreaded Comanche was not so vicious after all. Miguel did not mention this latter fact. He asked innumerable questions which El Gato answered, and finally the boy invited Miguel to cross the stream and visit Bigote's tepee. Miguel accepted with alacrity.

He was interested in everything he saw in the Comanche camp, in the lodges, the shields that hung from lances beside the tepee doors, in the cooking arrangements, everything. Jimmy Gallant tolerantly answered questions. They left the tepee, intending to return to the Comancheros' camp, and as they walked among the lodges, the white girl, followed by a squaw, came from Lovato's lodge just as they passed. Miguel stopped short, demanding to know her identity.

"Es Tejano," Jimmy answered, and briefly spoke of the girl's capture in the raid.

Miguel shook his head. "But that is bad," he said. "Very bad."

There was no word of answer as they returned across the creek.

Trading had slowed. Tafoya dealt out a little more brandy, judging two kegs to be the right amount this time. The Comancheros loafed by their carretas, waiting for the trading to resume. Miguel and Jimmy Gallant climbed into a cart. From this vantage point they could look a distance across the plain. To the north there was a dark and moving mass, like a

cloud upon the grass, and Miguel demanded an explanation.

"*Cebola,*" Jimmy answered. Buffalo.

Instantly Miguel was filled with enthusiasm. He had never hunted buffalo and he must kill one. He sought out Tafoya, demanding a companion for a hunt, but the leader of the Comancheros shook his head. There was no time for hunting with the trade so brisk, and Miguel, returning to the cart was downhearted. Jimmy Gallant, eyeing his companion, formed a decision.

"I will take you," he said. "Tomorrow." Immediately the volatile Miguel was himself again, his spirits lifted, full of plans for the promised hunt.

THERE WAS a dance in the Comanche village that night, an impromptu affair brought on by the brandy. Some of the Comancheros drifted across the creek to watch, and with them went Miguel. He watched the dancers whirl and stamp in the firelight and at first was fascinated. But the sheer savagery, the scalps dangling from the lances, the chilling bloodcurdling whooping of the dancers, their gestures and postures unmistakable in their meaning, crept home to the young *Mejicano*. Hot blooded as he was, venturesome as he was, he felt a cold chill sweep over him. This, then, was the way in which the cattle, the horses, the scanty gold were acquired, through stealth and theft and bloody, vicious killing. He returned to the carretas and finding Tafoya beside the fire, asked questions.

Yes, Tafoya agreed, the Comanches took the cattle and the horses from the *Tejanos*. That made the trade. It was a good thing too, for all *Tejanos* were bad men, very bad men. Miguel went to bed dissatisfied with what he had learned, thinking about it, wondering concerning it; and the whoops ands yells from across the creek pursued him and drove sleep away.

The dance had another consequence. Vigilance in the Comanche camp relaxed and even the squaws went to the central fire to watch. Only Jimmy Gallant, morose and thoughtful, stayed from the attraction and drifted through the lodges to Bigote's tepee. He was seated in front of the entrance when he heard a small noise and, instantly alert, slipped around the edge of the lodge. The sound came again. Jimmy drew his knife and, cat-like, went into the grass. Ten rods from the tepee he came upon the white girl creeping away. She did not hear El Gato's approach, had no knowledge of his nearness until a hand clamped heavily upon her shoulder.

Gale might have screamed had not another hand, hard as leather, been clapped across her mouth. She struggled in his grasp, fighting and trying to bite, but she was helpless. A hard voice rasped in her ear but she understood no word of what he said. Jimmy, realizing that he had caught the white girl, not wishing to hurt her, not wanting to turn her loose, met the girl's struggles and at the same time warned her, in corrupted Spanish, to silence. The struggle lessened and suddenly ceased, and the tense body Jimmy held relaxed. He freed the girl's mouth but retained his grip upon her arm.

"Kill me!" Gale whispered hoarsely. "Go on. Kill me. Anything is better than staying here."

Jimmy did not understand the English words but they roused memory. Long disused gates in his mind began rustily to open.

"Kill me!" the girl urged, and her voice was stronger. "Use your knife!"

"No kill," Jimmy rasped, and then, alarmed because the girl's voice was raised, clapped his hand across her mouth again, shook his head and launched again into the Spanish and Indian jargon. If she was discovered she would certainly be killed. She must go back to the lodge.

The Spanish meant nothing to Gale Baylor but the tone of the voice meant a great deal. Again the hand across her lips was withdrawn. She caught it. "You're a white man. You must help me get away."

Again the words knocked at memory's door. They had a familiar, haunting sound but the meaning eluded the man. He shook his head. "*No sabe,*" Jimmy said, and again repeated his warning in Spanish, adding that the girl would be helpless on the plains, that she could not escape. Now he released Gale's arm and immediately she rose and started to walk away from the tepees. Exasperated, Jimmy caught her. He shook his head fiercely,

struggling for words to explain. None came. Angry because of the failure, knowing the girl's danger, the man acted. Picking her up, he carried her, helpless as a child, back to Lovato's lodge. Behind it he stopped, set down his burden and, lifting the edge of the tepee, gestured. Plainly he meant for Gale to crawl in.

She faced him defiantly. "I'd rather die!" she whispered. "I won't."

In some deep recess of his mind Jimmy Gallant found the words he used. Again he gestured to the lifted leather. "I help yo'," he said, and then in Spanish, bade her crawl inside. Something in the voice, something in the man's attitude, reached through to Gale. In the gloom behind Lovato's lodge, with only the reflection from the fire for light, she stared at his face. She saw it but imperfectly and yet she felt the force of the blue eyes, the earnestness. Obediently she stooped and crawled into the lodge.

III

EARLY THE FOLLOWING morning the two young men left the encampment and rode north, Jimmy Gallant leading a pack horse and riding his buffalo horse, a black-stockinged dun; Miguel on a high-headed chestnut sorrel that fretted and sweat. Both youths were silent as they rode. El Gato broke the quiet.

"You are despondent," he accused.

Miguel glanced quickly at him. "I am thinking," he answered.

"Were your dreams bad?"

"I didn't dream." Miguel shook his head. His eyes caught the silver gleam of the cross on his companion's chest. Naturally, going in pursuit of buffalo, El Gato was naked from the waist up. "What is that?" Miguel reigned in, swinging close and reaching out his hand.

El Gato drew away. "My medicine," he answered. "Don't touch it."

"A cross," Miguel marveled, and reaching under his own shirt withdrew the little San Miguel medal he wore.

Jimmy's eyes showed interest and he leaned forward. "Let me see."

Miguel allowed the piece to be examined, then reached again for the Saint Andrew's Cross. This time Jimmy did not recoil and Miguel turned the silver talisman and read the dim engraving. "Jaime," he said, giving the word the soft Spanish pronunciation, Hy-me.

Jimmy's lips moved stubbornly, trying to form a word. "Jimmy," he said firmly. "Jimmy Gallant." For the first time in years he had spoken his own name.

"Jaime Galan," Miguel repeated.

"No. Jimmy Gallant."

"That is your name?"

El Gato nodded.

"You are a white man," Miguel said with vigor. "How did you come to be here?"

For a moment Jimmy Gallant hesitated, then reading Miguel's eyes, he knew that he could trust his companion. The horses fidgeted impatiently.

"We will ride," Jimmy Gallant said. "I will tell you."

Jimmy Gallant never had forgotten the day of his capture. True, he had learned to dissimulate his feelings but there was no need of that here. He talked, fragmentarily at first and then, as anger spurred him, with fire. Miguel, listening, watched the other and when Jimmy finished, spoke in turn.

"You hate them, don't you?"

The look in his companion's eyes was answer enough. Miguel asked, "Why haven't you run away?"

"Because I couldn't. And because I have something to do here. I tried and I was caught and brought back. Now I think. . . . Last night I stopped . . . ." Jimmy checked. He was about to speak of his experience with the girl.

"You stopped . . . .?"

With a burst of confidence Jimmy completed the statement he had begun. When he finished Miguel nodded.

"We must help her," he said. "And, amigo, you must get away, too. You must come with us."

Jimmy shook his head. "Not yet," he answered. "There is something I must do."

Not all of Miguel's prying could worm the secret from Jimmy. He would not tell Miguel that the "something" he must do was to kill Lovato. Miguel kept talking, planning, arguing that Jimmy Gallant should accompany the Comancheros back to Nuevo Mejico. "At least," he said, "even though it is wrong, this trade will

help you."

"Wrong?"

"This trade. These Comancheros." Miguel swept his arm toward the open plain. "If the Comanches could not trade they would not steal. They would not raid."

"Porque?" Jimmy asked, puzzled.

Miguel went on, amplifying the idea, explaining to his companion that the Comanches stole because they could trade the cattle and horses and that without Comancheros to bring trade goods out upon the plains, there would be no raids and killing. He reasoned from cause to effect, forgetting all the while the innate nature of the savage, the delight of savage minds, in theft and killing and torture.

Jimmy Gallant listened and, as he heard, accepting Miguel's statements at their face value, he began to lump Comanches and Comancheros together in his mind. They were equally culpable, equally guilty, equally to be hated.

"So. You see?" Miguel completed. "I shall tell my father what I believe and he will not sell Tafoya goods any more."

THEY WERE well away from the camp, and now crowning a long swell they saw the buffalo. Jimmy wanted to ask Miguel questions but the latter, having dismissed the subject, was ready for something new. Excitement arose in him; he pointed, exclaimed *"Cebola!"* and would have ridden down on the game had not Jimmy restrained him. Jimmy had hunted buffalo many times and now he gave directions for the hunt, advising Miguel to select a cow, telling him the best place to shoot so that a vital spot would be hit. Impatient and eager as he was, Miguel paid little heed. Jimmy made ready his weapons, strung his bow and looked calmly over the game. Miguel lifted his rifle from his saddle fork.

Weapons that handled metallic cartridges were just coming into use on the plains and Miguel had a heavy Sharps, but having never fired the rifle he had little confidence in its potency and so he carried another weapon in a holster at his belt. This was a pistol, altered from flint to percussion lock and throwing a ball that weighed an ounce. He opened the Sharps' breech, glanced at the shell and then, all ready, turned to Jimmy Gallant.

Jimmy finishing his instructions, said, *"Sabe? Bien. Vamanos."*

They rode down the slope. In the depression at the bottom they left the packhorse hobbled and then, each selecting his quarry, separated. Jimmy wishing meat, chose a young cow, but Miguel, seeking adventure, picked the biggest bull he could see, and with a kick and a whoop came out of the dip.

Miguel's sorrel was no buffalo horse. Nervous and speedy, the sorrel was not sure-footed. Miguel bore down upon his selection and the massive bull, lord of this small band, wheeled and presented his head for a target. In his eagerness, Miguel fired quickly but not accurately. The Sharps bellowed and kicked, and its lead, glancing from the mighty shoulder-bone of the bull, tore a long and ragged wound that angered but hardly slowed the animal. The bull charged and the sorrel, wheeling away, tripped, partially took the shock of the charge and went down. Miguel was thrown clear and the bull went past almost unchecked.

Jimmy Gallant, on a trained buffalo horse, came up on the running cow that he had chosen, bent toward her, and as the horse pounded alongside discharged his arrow at not more than three feet. Well aimed and driven powerfully, the arrow flashed in between the cow's ribs, reaching for heart and lungs, and with the twang of the bowstring the horse turned, ready for the next victim. As his horse turned, Jimmy saw the sorrel struggling to his feet, Miguel prone on the grass, and the bull wheeling to charge again.

Shouting, "Lie still!" Jimmy kicked with drumming, spurless heels and bore down toward the bull, at the same time snatching out an arrow. He could not stop the bull's charge but he hoped to deflect it. The dun horse, running like a frightened rabbit, brought him up swiftly and again the bow-string twanged. Now Jimmy held the dun in place. He dropped the bow and, leaning from the saddle, forcing his horse close so that dun shoulder pushed against shaggy hide, caught the end of the arrow in his strong fist and, using it as a man might use a lance, thrust and probed. The arrow's stout shaft did not break and the sharp iron head churned in

the vitals of the charging bull. Miguel still somewhat dazed, saw it all: the bull, the horse and rider bearing down upon him. He reached for the pistol, cocked, it and, as the shaggy body was almost upon him, fired. Buffalo, horse, and man swept past, clearing Miguel by bare inches. He felt their passage but did not see it for he had closed his eyes against the swift approaching death. For what seemed centuries Miguel lay quiet and then a shout, fierce and distant, caused him to open his eyes and sit up. Three hundred yards away the great bull had staggered to his knees and Jimmy Gallant had reined in. Miguel rose to his feet and watched the bull fall and slowly die.

Jimmy caught the sorrel horse and retrieved his bow. When he came up, Miguel was examining the Sharps rifle with disgust. Neither youth spoke for a moment and then Jimmy dismounted. Miguel looked at him steadily. "You saved my life," he said. "I . . . that bull . . ."

Again the white man in Jimmy asserted itself. An Indian would have bragged and perhaps claimed a reward, but Jimmy refuted Miguel's statement. "You killed him. The little gun . . ." He grinned and reached out a hand. "Let me see it."

Wordlessly Miguel passed over the pistol and Jimmy examined it, his pleasure showing on his face. *"Es buena,"* he said. *"Un buena pistola."*

"Keep it. It is yours," Miguel answered, and then, his face lighting, *"Amigo mio."* He threw his arms around Jimmy.

THEY EXAMINED the bull. The ball of the pistol had broken a rib and penetrated the great chest. Undoubtedly the wound would have killed the beast, but both men knew that it was Jimmy's arrow and his swift action that had saved Miguel. Still Jimmy would have none of the older youth's gratitude, insisting that it was Miguel himself who had killed the buffalo, that the little gun had dealt the death wound. Miguel was all for butchering his game, but Jimmy dissuaded him. The cow—he gestured to where his own game lay—would furnish meat enough for all. Miguel deferring to his companion's judgment, Jimmy rode to the little draw for the hobbled pack horse and, returning with the animal, dismounted and went to work. Butchering was a squaw's duty and distasteful, but Jimmy knew how.

When they finished, the meat was loaded on the pack animal and the two rode back toward the south. As they rode Miguel looked fleetingly at his friend, once and then again. Suddenly he burst out: "You must not stay with *los indios, amigo mio.* You must come to Santa Fe with me. My father will welcome you as another son. You will be my brother. You are a white man. You must come."

Jimmy Gallant saw the light in Miguel's eyes and knew that what was said was truly meant. For an instant he considered and then shook his head.

"Some day," he said. "Not yet."

"But why? Why not now?"

Again Jimmy shook his head. "I can't. Not yet. But there is a thing that you can do for me."

"Name it. I'll do it."

"We must get the girl away. You must take her with you."

Miguel stared at his companion, and nodded. "I will do that," he agreed. "But how?"

The problem required consideration. Riding side by side the two friends talked. It would perhaps, Jimmy suggested, be possible to buy the girl from Lovato. She was a slave. Slaves were bought and sold. Perhaps if Miguel asked Tafoya to do the purchasing it could be accomplished. That was the plan they finally decided upon.

With the decision made they kept on talking. Jimmy was curious concerning Sante Fe and Miguel enlightened him. He spoke of the City of the Holy Faith, describing it, recounting its marvels. Sometimes Jimmy shook his head as in disbelief. Miguel talked of the wagons that came down the trail from Independence, of the merchants, of the wonders of the Governor's Palace. He was trying deliberately to intrigue his friend, attempting to interest this man who had saved his life. And in the talk Miguel mentioned a name casually: "Senor Pickerell."

Jimmy Gallant straightened as though shocked by lightning. "Who?" he demanded.

"Senor Pickerell," Miguel repeated. "Last year he was my father's wagon boss and brought our goods from Indepen-

dence."

"He is in Santa Fe?"

"Not now." Miguel shrugged. "My father discharged him for dishonesty. Why?"

"Pickerell," Jimmy Gallant repeated to himself. "Heintzlemann."

"A man named Heintzlemann was with Pickerell," Miguel said. "What is it, amigo? Why do you look so?"

Jimmy shook his head. How could he tell this friend, this first friend of all his life, that in brief moments his personal devils, his bad medicine, had become men? Men with arms and legs and hearts, men that walked . . . and could be killed!

The buffalo meat was most welcome at the Comanchero camp and Jimmy Gallant shrewdly gave it all to the traders. He cautioned Miguel to progress carefully in the matter of purchasing the white girl and Miguel promised to put the matter to Tafoya diplomatically. Miguel was sure that he would be successful for Tafoya would naturally wish to keep the good will of Don Fernando Alcazar. So leaving his friend, Jimmy returned to the Comanche camp.

Bigote was in his lodge and, eyeing his adopted son, asked questions concerning the buffalo hunt. Jimmy answered frankly but said nothing of Miguel's escape from death. Bigote's eyes were shrewd and sharp in his fat face and, when Jimmy sat down and attacked his stewed meat, the older man continued to watch the boy. He spoke suddenly. "Lovato will not sell the white girl."

Jimmy nodded, not greatly concerned. Lovato might not dispose of his slave for ponies or such other property as Bigote possessed, but for brandy and the riches that Tafoya could offer, he would sell.

"Do you want the white girl very much?" Bigote asked.

Jimmy thought swiftly and then, making his answer as strong as possible, said: "My blood burns for her."

The older man grunted, finished his meat and, wiping the grease across his lips, got up and left the tepee. Within a few minutes Jimmy also left.

AS HE WALKED through the camp he noted absences, Negrito was gone and so were a dozen of the younger men. Dusk had come and the absences roused curiosity and presentiment in Jimmy, for Indians were rarely missing from the camp at night. Evil spirits stalked abroad in the darkness and only when they were raiding did warriors stay away from the lodges after nightfall. Something was afoot, Jimmy was sure. He stopped by Lovato's teepee, watching it. Lovato came out and stood by the fire and Jimmy walked away.

Farther along he came upon a youngster not quite his own age, with whom he was friendly. They exchanged greetings and Jimmy could see that the other was fairly bursting with secret information. Still he asked no questions, knowing that an attitude of curiosity would silence the other. The youngster, having asked concerning the hunt, the number of buffalo, and Jimmy's companion, could restrain himself no further.

"Negrito is gone," he announced, "and Pancho and Tomas." He named others. Jimmy nodded.

"You could have gone to if you had been here," the boy informed. "They have gone"—he stopped and having looked all around to see that no one overhead— "to follow the Comancheros' backtrail."

"Verdad?" Jimmy asked incuriously.

"Si. Es verdad." The boy laughed and Jimmy grinned. "They are going to find where the Comancheros hid the aguardiente and steal it. It would be a good joke on the Comancheros to have their hidden cache of brandy stolen."

"I wish I had been here," Jimmy said.

"I wanted to go," the other announced. "Negrito would not let me."

There was more talk and then, leaving the youngster, Jimmy went on toward the creek. He was not particularly concerned about the potential loss the Comancheros might suffer. Rather he was concerned to learn how Miguel had come out with Tafoya. It was almost dark when Jimmy crossed the creek and approached the Comanchero camp. As he came up a man arose from the shadows, halting him, and Jimmy explained that he wished to see Miguel. The guard gestured with his gun and answered bluntly, ordering Jimmy away. Jimmy argued, the guard grew angry and their raised voices brought

Tafoya.

Again Jimmy said that he wanted to see Miguel and Tafoya, brusque as the guard, commanded him to leave. Jimmy called, "Miguel! *Hola,* amigo!" and Miguel came out of the circle of carts, joining Tafoya, the guard, and Jimmy Gallant.

"Come to the fire," he invited. "This is the man, Tafoya. I told you . . ."

"I don't care what you told me," Tafoya rasped. "No Comanche comes into my camp tonight."

Miguel would have argued but Jimmy said, *"Es nada,* amigo. Have you asked him?"

"No," Miguel answered, and then turning to Tafoya, asked him to step aside. The three removed themselves from the hearing of the curious guard, and when they paused Tafoya asked brusquely what was wanted. Miguel spoke of the white girl in Lovato's camp and asked the Comanchero chief to buy her. Tafoya heard him out and laughed mirthlessly.

"No," he said. "I won't buy her. I won't even try to buy her. Do you think I'm a fool?"

"But she is white," Miguel argued. "The Comanches captured her and . . ."

"She is a *Tejano,*" Tafoya interrupted. "Do you think I'd be fool enough to take a *Tejano* back with me? I might as well stand in the plaza in Santa Fé and shout what I'd been doing. Not Rafael Tafoya." Both the young men eyed him as they stood there just beyond the circle of carretas in the dim firelight. "The gringos," Tafoya said "have made a foolish law. No one is allowed to trade with the Comanches. Didn't you know that?"

"I knew it," Miguel answered, "but . . ."

"Let the gringos buy her," Tafoya rasped. "My business is to trade with *los indios.* If the gringos knew that we had been trading they would take us both to prison. Don Fernando would not like to see his son in prison."

JIMMY GALLANT, watching Miguel, saw the other's eyes flicker and knew that he had lost. Disappointment and anger jostled in his mind. Miguel said, "Rafael is right, amigo. My father . . ."

Jimmy snarled one word, *"Cobardes,"* cowards, and wheeling from the men strode off toward the creek. Let them stand and talk, he thought angrily. Let them! The Comanches were searching for the brandy cache and they would find and steal the liquor. Let them do whatever they wished with the Comancheros. He, Jimmy Gallant, needed no help from the Comancheros or Miguel Alcazar; he needed no help from anyone.

When he reached the Comanche camp Jimmy went directly to Bigote's tepee and sat down, morosely studying the small flames of the fire. He sat unmoving for half an hour and it was there that Bigote found him.

Bigote sat down beside him and for a while said nothing. He glanced then a time or two at his adopted son, cleared his throat and spoke. "Lovato will not sell the girl."

Jimmy said nothing.

"Lovato," Bigote said, "is going to take the cattle we have traded to the Comancheros. He will let them get half a day on the trail, then he will steal the cattle."

Still Jimmy Gallant made no response.

"I do not think this is a good thing," Bigote continued. "I said to Lovato and the others that it is not a good thing. They would not listen." He drew out his pipe, filled it and having lighted the tobacco, smoked a puff or two and passed the pipe to the boy. "I have had bad dreams," Bigote said morosely. "My medicine is bad. Do not steal the white girl, El Gato. It will not be good and I will die."

Jimmy passed back the pipe. It seemed that Bigote had been reading his mind for he was planning exactly the thing that Bigote had warned against.

"My medicine is very bad," Bigote repeated, and rising, went into the lodge.

The usual noisy activity of the camp was missing. There was none of the raucous chatter and laughter. Something was on foot, something was stirring. Jimmy Gallant watched the fire die out and then he, too, went into the lodge.

His sleep was troubled. In his dreams he saw again his mother's sightless eyes, the arrow in Bob's broad chest, heard the shouts of the raiders. Six years had implanted a good deal of the savage in Jimmy Gallant, the superstitions and the beliefs. But six years had not rubbed out the cold, clear courage and reason of the white

man. Dream he did, and badly, but in the morning when he arose there was a fixed determination in his mind.

The camps stirred and roused. Food was eaten. The Comancheros across the creek came down to the bank with wares to display and trade but not a Comanche crossed the stream. Tafoya was alarmed. He sent a small keg of brandy as a present to Lovato. It was received but the trade did not begin. The Comancheros could not understand what had happened but they did not like it. Men guarded the horses and cattle already acquired and the animals were close herded near the carretas. Tafoya gave his orders and the guards were watchful. Across the creek the Comanche camp appeared peaceful and the women moved about their tasks, but no Indian approached the creek to trade.

Jimmy Gallant, rousing early, slipped out of the camp. He went north and, seeking concealment, found it in tall buffalo grass near the trail that led down to the creek. The squaws would follow this trail for water and Jimmy waited. He watched Bigote's women come with their pots, fill them and carry them away. He saw others come and return to the lodges and presently Lovato's women appeared, the white girl among them.

THE SQUAWS filled the pots and fortuitous circumstances favored the hidden man. Marguerito's woman, an inveterate gossip, appeared, and the women stopped to chatter at the stream. Only the white girl, heavy-laden, climbed the bank. As she passed the tall grass Jimmy Gallant hissed and the girl flinched.

"Esta noche," Jimmy whispered, low voiced. The girl's face was blank but she turned toward him. Jimmy was angry with her carelessness, for an Indian woman would have given no sign that she heard. He sought for a word and found it: "Tonight."

Now the girl put down the pots she carried and edged closer to the grass.

"Tonight," Jimmy hissed, striving desperately for the English, to tell what was on his mind. "I come. We go."

The girl's face lighted and she clasped her hands. "I knew you were a white man," she breathed. "I knew that you would help me."

"Quitate!" Jimmy warned, for the gossip circle at the creek had broken up. The girl must have sensed this for resuming her pots she said, "I'll be ready," and went on up the path.

After a time Jimmy left his hiding place. He had certain preparations to make and he must so prepare that he would not be suspected. To that end he went to the pony herd and taking a horse, rode for a time. When he returned the pony to the herd he left a length of braided rawhide dangling from the animal's neck. He managed, too, to fasten another short rope to another horse. The two animals he had chosen were his own dun buffalo horse and a bay, close-coupled with plenty of speed and bottom.

Returning to Bigote's tepee he moved about, selecting things with his eyes, locating them but making no effort to move them. These—robes, a saddle, a little food, his weapons—he must take when the time was ripe. He was so engaged when Bigote entered.

BIGOTE was still morose and downcast and Jimmy felt guilt for what he planned. He could not, while he stayed in the lodge, avoid Bigote's brooding eyes and so he left the tepee. Looking across the creek toward the Comanchero camp he saw the herd held close. Miguel was with the cattle and something prompted Jimmy to speak to Miguel. Accordingly, he slipped away and using all the stealth that six years of savage living had taught him, circled downstream, crossed the creek and worming his way through the grass on his belly, came close on the downwind side of the herd and waited for his friend. Miguel came, riding his slow round, and Jimmy spoke, low voiced, "Amigo."

When Miguel stopped Jimmy whispered swiftly, "You are in danger. Get away. Get your horses and go home." He did not feel that he must warn the others, only Miguel who had been good to him, who had given him a pistol, balls, powder and caps, whose life he had saved.

Miguel rasped, "Danger? What danger?"

"Comanches," Jimmy began, and stopped. From nearby a man shouted, *"Miguel! Mira! Mira los Comanches!"*

Miguel jerked his head toward the east

and Jimmy Gallant, half rising, saw the cause for the alarm. A party of braves headed by Negrito was riding into the Comanche camp. They were waving weapons, shouting and swaying in their saddles, and the pack ponies which followed the riders were burdened with brandy kegs. The expedition had been successful; they had followed Tafoya's backtrail and found and looted the hidden cache. And they were very drunk. One young buck, swaying too far in his saddle, fell and lay sprawled, and his fellows did not heed him. Straight into the camp they came, and Comanches swarmed out to meet them.

The Comancheros, alarmed, all looked across the creek, watching what transpired, so engrossed that they did not see Jimmy Gallant come to his feet. Jimmy also watched. He saw Negrito dismount and, followed by half a dozen braves, weave through the tepees until he reached Bigote's tent. He saw men take position on either side of the entrance, saw Bigote come out. Bigote paused in the doorway and the men on either side caught and held his arms. Negrito thrust his gun forward and there was a dull report. Bigote, shot through, sagged in the grasp of those that held him, and then as they released their holds, dropped in the tepee entrance. A wild, fierce shout went up. The murderer lifted his weapon and swung it wildly. There was turmoil in the camp and Jimmy Gallant, turning, ran north, reached a curve of the creek and, dropping into it, was lost among the clumps of grass that grew beside the stream. Not even Miguel saw him go.

Crouching in the creek bend, hidden by the grass, Jimmy Gallant thought desperately. He had seen murder and he knew that the whole camp would be wild. He knew too that there would be no vengeance taken. Without a leader, none of Bigote's followers would attempt to kill Negrito. Later, perhaps, Bigote's blood kin would extract a payment, would bring their case before some of the older men and more powerful chieftains of the tribe; but this would not occur until a big camp was made, when many wandering bands of Comanches came together. And Jimmy Gallant knew, too, that his own life was worth nothing if he ventured into the camp. For Lovato, Negrito, and their followers would surely kill him.

Bigote had paid for his presumption to power, for balking Lovato, for boasting, for protecting Jimmy Gallant. Bigote was dead. Jimmy Gallant felt of the holstered pistol at his waist, touched the bag of balls, the little box of caps, felt of the powder horn. Then lifting himself cautiously so that he looked between the grass clumps on the bank he peered toward the camp and then sank once more into concealment. *"Este noche,"* he murmured. "Tonight," he had told the white girl. Tonight he would steal her away and tonight he would kill Lovato. He made himself comfortable in his hiding place, relaxing and resting. But his mind was busy planning. Slowly a scowl came over his face. He could kill Lovato, but if he did he would alarm the whole camp, and burdened with the white girl he could scarcely hope to escape. Again, he might steal the girl and, without alarming the others, get her away. He could not do both things. Desire for revenge, the wish to get the girl to safety, each struggled with the other. As gradually as it had come the scowl left Jimmy's face. He had made up his mind.

The Comancheros needed no explanation of what had happened; when they saw the brandy kegs and the drunken riders, their warning was complete. Tafoya, scowling and swearing, stamped about the carretas and gave orders. To stay longer was to invite death, or, if not death, at least to be stripped of all that had been won by trading. Tafoya knew that he must put sufficient distance between himself and Mucho Que so that Lovato and his band would not think pursuit worth while. But he dared not leave with the Comanches in this wild drunken state. Later, as the liquor took hold, they would be sodden. If he could weather out the immediate, impending trouble, Tafoya could win to safety, and he planned accordingly.

THE CATTLE and horses were drifted slowly westward, only the cart oxen left behind. The drift was unobtrusive so that any excitement of the Comanches would be avoided. Tafoya ordered the carts loaded and this, too, was done as casually as possible. Guards were doubled

and every man that owned a gun was placed at a vantage point. Miguel Alcazar heard the orders and Tafoya bade the young man stay close to him for the weathered Comanchero leader wished to take no chances with the son of his patron, Don Fernando.

While these subtle preparations were in progress the scene across the creek was one of indescribable wildness. Mounted braves dashed about the tepees, shouting and shaking weapons. Bigote's body had been dragged out of the camp, spat upon, stripped, and left. Those who followed Bigote hid in their lodges but were routed out by their fellows and, having drunk joined in the revel. Kegs were broached, and gourds and a few cups that the Comanches possessed emptied as rapidly as they were filled.

As they became more and more drunk, the temper of the Comanches changed. Warriors ran down to the creek, called threats and taunts, discharged a few arrows, fired a shot or two. An attack would have surely come had it not been for the lure of the liquor; but the braves would not leave it until all the kegs were emptied. Tafoya, counting on this, watched the creek bank and the Comanche camp with shrewd, fearless eyes.

"Not until they have finished all the aguardiente," he said to Miguel. "They will do nothing until then, and then they will be too drunk. And they won't attack at night. They are afraid of the dark. We will go as soon as night comes."

As he spoke, Tafoya turned and looked toward the west. The day was hot and the wind was but a breath. Westward and to the north, a line of clouds lay low and dark against the horizon and the Comanchero nodded satisfaction. "She makes bag," he said. "The weather is breeding. It will rain and that is good. I do not like to travel in the rain, but then"—he nodded toward the Comanche camp—"neither do they."

Miguel was fascinated by the scene. He searched for Jimmy Gallant and, failing to find him among the tepees, bethought himself of the scheme they had made. And that recalled another thing to mind: Jimmy had called him *cobarde*. The word rankled and Miguel made a resolve. He would, regardless of the Comanches, regardless of Tafoya's watchfulness and his unwillingness, make an attempt to rescue the white girl in the tepee. It was a rash and foolhardy idea, particularly for one with no more attainments in prairie craft than Miguel Alcazar; but Miguel's blood burned hot and the epithet rang in his ears.

In the tepees the squaws did not drink. Brandy was for the braves, far too scarce and precious to be wasted on mere women. One or two filched a cup from their masters and got a taste of the liquor, but for the most part they waited, knowing that the brandy would bring abuse and the uttermost licentiousness. Gale Baylor, in Lovato's tepee, cowered behind a pile of robes and waited, for what she did not know. Ca-ho-pa, the oldest wife, had stolen a little brandy and had beaten the girl, and now Ca-ho-pa squatted, half drunk, by the door of the lodge. Gale watched her and the entranceway with wide, frightened eyes.

There was another who watched and waited. Jimmy Gallant peered between the grass clumps and listened as the revelry became more and more maudlin, changing from fierceness and blood-lust to aimless shoutings.

The brandy lowered in the kegs and the sun slid down its western path and hid itself behind the lowering cloudbank. In the Comanche camp a few braves, completely sodden, collapsed and fell, and frightened women, making themselves as unobtrusive as possible, crept out and carried their drunken masters to their tents. Dusk came and Jimmy Gallant rose and stretched his muscles, felt of his knife, and removing the pistol from its sheath, looked at the cap as Miguel had taught him; then, restoring the weapon, he slid noiselessly toward the pony herd.

At the Comanchero camp Tafoya gave orders. Oxen were yoked and hitched to carts, precious grease was daubed on wooden axles to render them as noiseless as possible, and three men—the oldest and wisest of the traders—collected small piles of buffalo chips, preparatory to building fires. Those fires, left burning, would lull the drunken savages across the creek into the belief that the Comancheros were still in their camp. Miguel Alcazar watched these preparations and in him his high and foolish resolve strengthened. Opening the

breech of his Sharps as he looked at the brass rim of the cartridge, then tightening his cinchas and adjusting his leggins, he made ready.

Jimmy Gallant, slipping into the pony herd, sought and found those animals with drag ropes; then, leading them, staying close to the ground as a wolf, Jimmy worked slowly toward the edge of the herd. Clear of the horses he mounted the dun and circling the camp until he was east of it, staked the animals by knotting the ends of the rawhide ropes and burying the knots in holes that he dug with his knife. Then, ghost-like, he moved toward the shouts and the firelight of the encampment, little dreaming that another, on a like mission, also moved toward the tepees.

MIGUEL ALCAZAR having seen the oxen hitched to the carts and the fires kindled, mounted his sorrel and rode with the others westward. But as the night descended he slipped away into the darkness and he, too, crossed the creek and circled behind the lodges, intent, if possible, to find the girl and win her free. So, from the east two men, one mounted and the other on foot, stole toward the Comanche camp, and in that camp Lovato drunkenly reeled to his feet and lurched toward his tepee. As he moved he called obscenely to his fellows and they laughed.

Jimmy Gallant, reaching the back of Lovato's tepee, paused and listened. He heard a low sob and a shrill command for silence. The girl then was in the lodge and there was someone with her. Jimmy thought that he recognized Ca-ho-pa's voice. He scowled while he daringly planned his entrance, then rising, strode around the edge of the lodge and, reaching the tepee door, went in.

Ca-ho-pa had had only enough brandy to edge her already edged disposition. She rose up, shrilly demanding to know who had entered. The answer was two swift hands that caught her scrawny neck and silenced her.

Wiry, strong as rawhide, Lovato's oldest squaw struggled and fought, scratching and kicking, and Jimmy Gallant choked her limp and cast her aside. He might have killed her but he did not. Somehow he could not give that twist and jerk that would have broken her wrinkled neck. That done he spoke. "Come." By good chance the word was English and Gale Baylor arose from her crouch beside the robes.

She reached Jimmy's side and caught his arm. The youth's voice was calmly reassuring. "We go. *Andale!*" He pulled her toward the door. As he reached it a figure loomed up and Lovato's voice rasped.

If Jimmy Gallant had been purely Indian his hand would have found his knife. But he was white. His fists clenched without volition and he struck, once, twice, and then again. The first blow found a target just below Lovato's breastbone and, hit squarely in the solar plexus, the Comanche chieftain lost command of lungs and throat and legs. The other blows crashed against him as he went down, reaching his face, spreading his nose across it, cutting and blinding him. He lay gasping, and Jimmy, grasping Gale's arm, fairly snatched her from the tepee. As they ran toward the waiting horses a shout arose in the camp. Looking swiftly over his shoulder Jimmy saw a mounted man come into the firelight, saw drunken braves reel up and pull the rider down. He caught a glimpse of the rider's face as he struggled. Jimmy Gallant almost stopped, for that captured man was Miguel. Resuming his pace after the fragmentary pause, Jimmy pulled the girl along.

They slowed before they reached the horses. Looking back toward the camp, Jimmy was filled with fear mingled with contrition. He had called Miguel a coward and yet Miguel had come, else why had he been on a horse, else why had he crossed the creek and been pulled into the camp? The girl's hand was on Jimmy's arm, clutching the hard muscles. She could see the man's face silhouetted against the lighter sky. It was keen and hawk-like and resolute.

It was hard for Jimmy Gallant to express his plans. He spoke in Spanish and the girl shook her head, looking at him trustfully. Jimmy touched his chest. "*Yo soy* Jimmy Gallant," he said. Then, pointing toward the tepees and the fire: "I go!"

"No!" Gale's whisper was fierce. "Don't leave me!"

"I go." Jimmy bent and patted the ground, bidding the girl sit down. Frightened and alarmed, she refused. Strong

hands on her shoulders forced her down and the braided rawhide was thrust into her fingers. *"Los caballos,"* Jimmy rasped, and in rapid Spanish bade her hold the horses and wait. Not understanding the torrent of words, Gale tried again to rise and was forced back to earth. Then through her alarm the idea was borne home. "I'll wait," she promised.

"Wait!" Jimmy caught at the words. "I go." He moved away and when the girl remained motionless, he knew that she understood. Like a wraith he slipped into the semi-dark.

At the edge of the Comanche camp Jimmy paused and then, prone, crawled among the lodges. There were no better sneak thieves among the plains Indians than the Comanches, and Jimmy had learned from them. He wormed his way toward the fires and, pausing, saw Miguel sitting bound in the firelight. As Jimmy watched a brave lurched up, staggered to the captive, spat on him, and slapped him viciously. There was yet no sign of Lovato.

Leaving his vantage point Jimmy slipped under the edge of the nearest tepee, for he had no time to pick and choose. In the darkness of the deserted lodge, by sense of touch, he found a saddle, a blanket, and coil of braided rawhide. These were what he wanted. Thus far his plan had been simple, but the lasso on the saddle amplified his scheme. With saddle and blanket Jimmy retreated from the tent.

GALE BAYLOR, holding the horses, heard a voice, low and reassuring, and as she came to her feet, found Jimmy beside her. He spoke swiftly as he saddled the dun and she understood no word he said. Turning impatiently he caught Gale about the waist and lifted her on a horse. They rode a circle about the camp and pausing north of the lodges the man gestured again, bidding her dismount.

The girl had come to accept whatever Jimmy Gallant did or ordered. Obediently she got down and again the rawhide ropes were thrust into her hands. She saw the man busy himself at the saddle and then he again disappeared into the night. For a long time Gale did not move and again she was startled when the man appeared suddenly. He mounted and she would have followed suit but the pony shied away. She had approached from the left, as all white horsemen do, but the Indian pony was accustomed to being mounted from the right. "No!" Jimmy rasped and again pushed the girl down.

The girl sat quietly and the man, unable to tell her his wishes, patted her shoulder reassuringly, wheeled his horse, and was gone. Frightened and alone in the night the girl watched the firelight outlining the lodges a quarter of a mile away. Then in the night there sounded a shrill whoop, a wild and terrifying yelling, and immediately after the pounding of many hoofs.

Jimmy Gallant was attempting a diversion. He knew how the Comanches valued their horses and he knew, too, that the horse herd could be stampeded. He had added a touch of his own to the stampede. Two horses were necked together with the lasso he had stolen with the saddle, and, when with whoop and yell Jimmy started the horses, those two ran with the rest. Instead of starting the horses away from the camp, Jimmy came up on the far side and directed them toward the lodges. The horses ran madly, pursued by a whooping, yelling demon that waved a flapping blanket. They swept down upon the lodges where yelling men leaped up and scrambled away. The lasso stretched between two pounding brutes, caught and upset a tepee, fouled another and dragged it, and now the panic was complete.

Jimmy, catching over his shoulder the rawhide loop common to every Comanche saddle, discarded his blanket and rode yelling toward the center of the startled camp. Miguel, unable to move because of his bonds, was in the center of a maelstrom of frightened ponies, fires, and shouting, running men. Befuddled by the drink, the Comanches hardly knew what had happened and before they could realize, it was all over. Jimmy Gallant, toe hung in his stirrup, one knee bent around the high cantle of his saddle, supported by the rawhide loop, swooped down, dipped low and, lifting Miguel, brought him up. Not a shot was fired nor did an arrow hiss as the two, dodging among those tepees still upright, sought the darkness. Jimmy Gallant went in and out of the Comanche camp as a hawk dips into and out of a chicken yard and like the hawk he carried

off what he had come for. Gale, waiting in the darkness, saw an apparition against the skyline; a horse bearing two men. The horse stopped, a man swung down, there was swift movement and then she was snatched up, lifted to the bare back of the horse she had held. She felt that horse sag with added weight, felt a strong arm grasp her waist, and Jimmy Gallant's voice rasped in her ear.

"Vamanos! Vamanos! Andale!" The horses wheeled and went pounding away, and behind them the wild turmoil of the startled camp diminished and died.

IV

JIMMY GALLANT was weatherwise as Tafoya and from his concealment in the creek bend had seen the gathering storm in the northwest. The Comanches were good trailers, but no man can follow a trail that has been washed away; and so taking the opportunity presented, Jimmy headed toward the storm. They rode at a long run, the bay horse carrying double and striving to keep up with the dun. When a mile had been covered Jimmy checked their pace, for a long pull lay ahead and it was imperative to save the horses. No word had been spoken but now Miguel must give his thanks and praise. He did so lavishly, saying that this was the second time that Jimmy had saved his life and that he was eternally indebted. Twice the speech was interrupted by a catch in Miguel's voice, and Jimmy, breaking in, asked anxiously if his friend was hurt.

"No!" Miguel assured. "It is nothing. I am not hurt."

They pushed along and as they drew nearer to the lightning flashing in the clouds, and as the constant rumble of the thunder became louder, the first big drop of rain struck.

The rain came in earnest, a swift, downpouring torrent, cold and bitter with the wind that lashed it, wetting them to the skin. They rode steadily, the horses plodding ahead, heads bent, facing the blast. Only once did they check and this so that Jimmy might trade places with Gale, put himself in front and so shield her as well as he might. The rain forced silence upon them and Jimmy kept direction by the wind on his face. So, for three hours they forged steadily ahead.

At the end of that time the fury of the storm was past, although rain still fell and the wind was cold. The bay horse tripped and recovered and Jimmy pulled up. They were in a depression, a buffalo wallow, and they had come far enough. Sliding down, he led the bay across the wallow, pausing at the western bank. Miguel dismounted stiffly, stifling a groan as he moved, and leaning against the dun horse for support, while Jimmy helped Gale down. They sat under the semi-protection of the wallow's bank, the girl in the center so that she received warmth from the youths' bodies, Jimmy and Miguel each holding a horse by the rawhide tethers. No one spoke. They were cold and stiff and utterly weary. Presently Gale's head rested gently on Jimmy's shoulder and he shifted carefully, easing her into a more comfortable position. Miguel, too, was asleep, his chin resting on his chest. Jimmy Gallant leaned his back against the bank and, relaxing, dozed off.

The first faint light roused them and each, opening eyes, looked toward the east. The rain was gone but broken clouds remained and the horizon was striped with blue and pink. As they wakened they became aware of fresh disaster. The bay horse stood in the wallow, held by the tether that Jimmy had looped around his wrist, but the dun was gone. In the night Miguel's lax hand had allowed the buffalo horse to pull away and drift off. The men sprang to their feet and Miguel's voice was filled with contrition as he reproached himself. Jimmy shook his head, twisted the rawhide to make a headstall for the bay and, mounting, rode out.

He was back in half an hour. The strayed horse had struck a line for the southeast, headed back to Mucho Que and the Comanche horse herd, and Jimmy had followed only far enough to make sure that he could not catch the dun. Again Miguel reproached himself, but Jimmy grinned and said, *"Es nada,* amigo."

The sun was fully risen now. They drank of the water collected in the depression, and then made their plans. Here was the *llano,* without landmarks or any trails save game trails. But south, so Jimmy Gallant said, was the Comanchero

road to Mucho Que. They would strike south, find that road and so intercept Tafoya's caravan. Miguel was eager to depart and so, having mounted Gale upon the bay, they started.

Miguel set forth strongly, filled with eagerness. For a time he swung along as lithely as Jimmy Gallant. Then his pace slowed and he seemed to move with difficulty. They were descending a long and gentle slope and, at its bottom where an old game trail made holes now filled with water, Miguel staggered and would have fallen had not Jimmy caught him. Miguel's face was pale and his eyes showed his pain.

"I cannot," he panted. "I can go no farther, amigo."

Jimmy lowered his friend to the grass. Miguel's dark leather shirt was darker still and wet with blood. Gale dismounted and Jimmy, having twisted the rawhide lead rope into a hobble for the horse, knelt, and lifting Miguel carefully, rolled up the shirt, exposing the man's side. There, just at the lower edge of the ribs, blood seeped from a long, clean knife wound.

"Last night," Miguel said. "When the Comanches captured me. It happened then."

Gale and Jimmy exchanged looks. Jimmy had seen such wounds before. It was not serious, not particularly dangerous for the knife had been stopped by the rib, but loss of blood had so weakened Miguel that he had not strength to walk. During the night, when they crouched in the buffalo wallow, his stillness and position had closed the wound and pressed its edges firmly together so that it did not bleed unduly; but movement had re-opened the wound and exercise had set the blood flowing.

"Why didn't you tell me?" Jimmy reproached. "You could have ridden. Why didn't you . . .?"

"I did not think it was bad," Miguel explained. "I felt the cut but I did not think it was deep. Only . . . I am weak, *companero*. I cannot walk. You two go on. Find Tafoya."

JIMMY'S EYES narrowed. "Not yet," he said. "First we will help you." Rising he cast about for something to use for a bandage. Gale, too, had risen and turned her back to the men. Now she faced them again, a strip of cloth held out.

"Here," she said.

Jimmy took the cloth, then moving away, bent down to where water glistened on a little spider web. Plastering the webs against the wound the blood seep lessened and Jimmy, kneeling, sought to hold Miguel's body upright and wrap the bandage.

"Let me!" Gale ordered, and took the bandage from him. Under her competent hands it formed a smooth, tight band about Miguel's body.

"Bueno!" Jimmy praised. *"Muy bueno!"*

Gale tied a final knot and her eyes sparkled as she looked at Jimmy.

"Thank you, senorita," Miguel said.

The girl's eyes flashed to him. "Where did you learn to speak English?" she asked.

Jimmy lowered his friend and Miguel looked up. "My father sent me to Saint Louis to the school."

"But . . ."

"I am Miguel Alcazar of Santa Fe, senorita," he explained. "Who are you?"

"My name is Gale Baylor."

"Que dice?" Jimmy demanded. The spoken words sounded familiar but he could not quite comprehend.

Miguel did not answer. The girl glanced to Jimmy and then back to Miguel. "He is a white man," she said. "He told me his name. Jimmy Gallant."

"Jaime Galan," Miguel said gravely. "He saved my life. Twice he has saved my life."

"And mine."

Jimmy knew that they were talking about him. *"Que dice?"* he demanded again, and then: *"Que nombre?"*

"He wishes to know your name," Miguel interpreted and then, looking at Jimmy: *"Es la Senorita* Gale Baylor."

"Gale Baylor," Jimmy repeated, and suddenly grinned. It was a rippling, infectious smile that, beginning with his eyes spread across his tanned face, and the others, watching, could not resist it. Miguel, weak as he was, laughed like a boy, and the girl laughed, too.

They talked after that, Miguel interpreting for Jimmy. Sometimes English words popped up in Jimmy's speech, for long-unused channels of his mind were opening. Gale's story was brief and very simple. She and her father had moved from

the East toward the Texas border. They were alone, for her mother was dead. Girl and man had been engaged in carving a new home on the border when the Comanches swooped down. "Dad was going to teach a school," Gale explained. "After mother died he couldn't bear to stay in Corpus Christi, and this offer came and . . . now he's dead. They killed him." She turned away, her voice breaking, and Miguel said softly: *"Pobrecita."*

Jimmy Gallant stared toward the east, his face rock-hard. Silence held for a moment and then, to break it, Jimmy asked a question. "Why did you go to Lovato's camp, *amigo mio?"*

"Porque si," Miguel began slowly, and then with a rush: "Because you had called me a coward. I thought that I could find the girl and get away. Tafoya was moving and I thought . . ."

Jimmy shook his head slowly. "Tonto!" he said softly. "Fool. *Pero tu eres mi amigo!"* He grinned, Miguel returned the grin, and Gale Baylor turning back to the men saw that look of complete understanding between them.

"And now," Miguel asked, "what will we do?"

IT WAS decided that Jimmy should take the bay and ride south. He could cover more country mounted than he could on foot, and, having found Tafoya, Jimmy would return with help. There was water in the holes for Miguel and Gale to drink, Jimmy had flint and steel in his pouch, and the prairie was drying so that presently buffalo chips could be collected for a fire. Jimmy passed over the pistol, pouch, and powderhorn, and, mounting the bay, rode off. Miguel, his first weakness passed, had been propped up a little in order to talk more easily, and he followed the receding horseman with his eyes.

"A fine man," he said. "My good friend."

"A good man," Gale agreed. "But he looks like an Indian." She shuddered.

"Why not?" Miguel demanded. "He has lived with the Indians."

Gale had questions and, so encouraged, Miguel told Jimmy's story as he knew it. He painted a bold and vivid picture and when he concluded the girl's cheeks were flushed and her eyes bright. "He will be my brother," Miguel completed. "When we reach Santa Fe and my father learns what he has done, he will take Jaime as his son."

"When we reach Santa Fe," Gale repeated. "What will become of me then?"

"You will come to my father's house, of course. My mother will welcome you. You . . . There was no one except your father?"

Gale turned from Miguel so that he could not see her face. "I have an aunt," she said after a pause. "Father's sister. She and her husband live somewhere in the East but . . ."

Miguel interrupted that troubled voice. "My father will find her," he stated confidently. "He is a great man, my father. You must not worry, senorita. Until we find your aunt you will live in Santa Fe and my father's home will be your home."

The girl turned to smile gratefully and suddenly the young New Mexican realized that she was beautiful. Gale was young but she was budding into womanhood; the fright that had marked her in the Comanche camp had sloughed away her freedom. Miguel Alcazar tried to straighten against the bank that supported his shoulders. "I lie here like a woman while Jaime does the work," he grumbled.

"Is a woman so bad then?"

"When I look at you I would say it was very good to be a woman," Miguel answered, smiling.

JIMMY GALLANT, riding south, fixed positions in his mind. They had come northwest from Mucho Que and so the Comanchero road lay south. There were no landmarks upon the Llano Estacado; it was a sea of rolling grassland, cut here and there with game trails, broken by hidden watercourses. The bay horse moved steadily at a running walk and Jimmy looked to right and left, ahead and behind him, as inherent instinct marked the passage, in his mind. Like an Indian he could travel anywhere. As he rode he muttered English words, trying to recall the speech that he had lost through long disuse. He wanted to talk to Gale Baylor without Miguel as intermediary, wanted to bring the sparkle to her eyes and the smile to her lips.

The *llano* was like an ocean stretching

away to horizons. The sun was high overhead and his shadow was beneath him and while his mind was preoccupied his senses were alert. So, when he caught movement behind him and to the left, he pulled the bay horse to a halt and faced in that direction. Northeast, a mile or more away, was a line of moving black dots. A band of the wild mustangs of the plain? He stared, trying to make sure. Something winked from the moving line, signaling across the grassland. Sun had caught on polished metal and flashed a warning. Those moving dots were neither buffalo nor wild horses. They were Comanches, and they were moving steadily toward the spot where Jimmy Gallant had left Miguel and Gale. The Bad Gods were in charge; his medicine was bad. Jimmy did not pause to debate but started the bay on a long course, bound to intercept the moving war party.

He lost sight of the Comanches as he entered a dip. Following along it, taking advantage of the concealment, he hastened the bay. Time ticked like a clock in his head and the dip he followed grew more shallow. He stopped and, dismounting, leading his horse, climbed the gentle slope, halting again as his head rose above the depression. He had been right. There, not three hundred yards away were the Indians. Jimmy could not see features but he recognized riders by their horses. There was Lovato upon his pinto war horse; there was Negrito astride a roan, Lame Bull on a chestnut sorrel. Negrito led another horse, Jimmy's dun buffalo pony. Immediately the boy knew how the Comanches had struck his trail. The escaped dun, heading home, had been intercepted. It had been easy enough to backtrack the dun. For an instant Jimmy's mind was filled with consternation and his heart was in his throat. Then he calmed and came to a decision. The warriors were riding leisurely, not hurrying, sure of their game. Jimmy Gallant slipped back to the bay, mounted and rode on up his depression, his course such as would intercept the Comanches. He came out of the dip, appearing not a hundred yards away from those leisurely riders. His voice rang out, tauntingly, insultingly:

"Ho . . . tontos! Aqui estoy. Mira! Aqui!"

Sudden appearance, taunting voice, surprise, gained him the time he had planned on. For half a minute Lovato and his followers taken utterly aback, did not move. They halted, facing toward Jimmy Gallant, and in that little pause he insulted them by gestures and voice, and wheeling the bay, kicked the horse to a run. Swiftness of action gained him distance. He was another fifty yards away before the Comanches, yelping like a wolf pack, broke from their halt into pursuit.

Jimmy was glad now that he rode the bay. The lost dun was more swift but lacked the bay's stamina. He risked a glance over his shoulder as he rode, crouched low on the bay's back, and saw the Comanches, Lovato in the lead, come sweeping after him like a savage rolling torrent. A gun banged and arrows hissed evilly. Jimmy dared not look again. Crouched like a jockey, intent to get every second of speed, every foot of distance that he could, he rode, watching ahead, tense and alert and ready.

He could not outdistance the men behind, not forever, but he could lead them away from Miguel and Gale and, before they caught him, unless a lucky shot from gun or bow checked his flight, he could take them a sufficient distance to insure the safety of his friends. And so, willing to sacrifice himself, Jimmy Gallant rode.

At first the Indians gained. They closed the distance a trifle and peerless bowmen that they were, they nearly brought him down. But when an Indian shot he was forced to check a little and lose distance, and, too, the crouching, bobbing mark was small. Jimmy dared not weave his horse for that would lose precious distance. He kept a straight course toward the south.

Within a mile the chase had settled down. The Comanches were silent, not shouting, but holding grimly to their mission. They were angry for more than one reason. Their captives had been stolen, and the dash of horses through their camp had upset their tepees and startled them; but chiefly they were resentful because that very stampede had ruined their drinking. Brandy kegs had been upset and smashed and the contents spilled and lost. It was this that, more than anything, kept Lovato and his men on Jimmy Gallant's heels. They had come out from Mucho

Que, at sunup, painted and bedizened for war. They had intended raiding the Comanchero caravan but the chance finding of the dun horse had turned them. Lovato had reasoned that it would be easy, first to pick up El Gato, the girl and the escaped prisoner, then to go on and find Tafoya. The others had listened to Lovato, so now, silently and remorselessly as a wolf pack following an antelope, they followed Jimmy Gallant.

THE BAY HORSE pounded along and occasionally now Jimmy looked back. He dared not let his pursuers come too close, but he did not want to outdistance them even if he could. He held his knife ready in his hand to use as a spur should some brave try a sudden dash. He kept the bay horse steady, and the bay, getting its second wind, plunged ahead. They drove across the rolling country, pursued and pursuers, each determined, each intent.

From the top of a long, low swell, Jimmy, looking southward, had a fleeting glimpse of a black blotch on the prairie. Buffalo it might be—he could not be sure—but he bent toward it. The Comanches, cutting across the long arc, gained a little distance and once more the bowmen began to shoot. An arrow ripped Jimmy Gallant's buckskin leggings and tore a red gash in the bay's shoulder. The horse flinched and almost broke stride, but Jimmy held control. Another arrow sang by overhead, falling, point up, in the sod. He passed it like a flash. Behind him the yelping broke out again as the Comanches, believing the chase almost at an end, closed in. Then, topping a rise, Jimmy viewed a sight below him. Hidden until now by a fold of prairie, was the Comanchero road to Mucho Que and on that road were the plodding oxen and the toiling carts of Rafael Tafoya, while beyond these was the herd of horses and cattle. Jimmy Gallant swung the bay horse straight toward them and his voice rose in a shrill shout: *"Hola, Comancheros! Los indios vienen!"*

As before, surprise gained him an instant. He had a flashing panorama of startled men, of frightened cattle and horses, of carts that were swung to face this new, swift danger. Then the bay pounded in between the carts and went on, curving toward the west. Jimmy flung himself to the side of the horse, right leg across the bay's back, right arm over the bay's straining neck. Peering beneath the neck he saw the Comanches come pounding into the carreta train and the reception that they received.

Both parties were surprised, for neither had had warning of the meeting. The Comanches had no time to form a charge. They struck the carts in the same order in which they had followed Jimmy Gallant, strung out according to the speed and stamina of their mounts. The Comancheros had no warning either but the carretas were heavy and in line. As hardy as the savage braves upon them, already at an alert for anticipated trouble, the traders met the charge. Guns banged and smoke bloomed above the carts. There were as many Comancheros as Comanches, perhaps more, and they had the advantage of position. Jimmy Gallant saw a saddle emptied; a brave lay on the ground and the riderless horse ran on. He saw the savage line recoil, saw that the lead carts were swinging in a circle and that the rear carts hurried, saw the men from the herd come galloping to help their fellows. Clinging like a leech to his bay horse, Jimmy Gallant laughed. The whole thing appealed to his savage sense of humor. He had brought Comanche and Comancheros together. Let them fight, let them kill each other. He hated them both and now he had time, time to drive on away, to free himself, to get clear. The riderless horse came on, rawhide lasso trailing from high pommeled saddle. Daringly Jimmy swung the bay, regaining his seat as he turned. He caught the trailing rope and pulled the horse close. So, erect and still laughing, had wrought, about the melee of carretas had wrought, about the melèe of carretas and riders, of savage shouts, of spitting guns and twanging bowstrings. Past the spreading herd he went, paralleling the Comanchero road. He crossed that dim cart track, swinging northward, pounded up a long slope and at its crest halted the winded bay and lifting himself, looked back.

The Comanches had drawn off into a ragged clump some distance from the carretas. The carts themselves had completed their circle and men were unhooking oxen

and moving the beasts to the center of the corral the carts formed. For the time at least, the two parties would occupy each other. Let them!

Jimmy kicked the bay and rode down from the long crest, his grin savage on his face, his heart filled with fierce pleasure. Carretas and herd, Comancheros and Comanches, were lost to view. Jimmy Gallant rode north and did not see two riders detach themselves from the clump of braves that faced the carts. Between his legs the sides of the bay horse expanded and fell as the weary pony blew, and beside him the horse he had taken followed at the end of its rawhide reins.

A GOOD MILE from the site of meeting, Jimmy stopped again. The horse he had captured was Moyah's war pony, a grulla, black marked on its gray hide, a good horse as Jimmy knew. The bay horse was done, fatigued from the long run. Still filled with high elation, Jimmy changed horses, moccasined toes finding the short stirrups. Chance had brought him to the Comanchero train, quick thinking had enabled him to use it. His was an exploit such as a man might brag about at a dance. He felt no remorse at all. The Comancheros were there to be used and he had used them. Whatever happened was good. Their trade was based on blood and treachery; they risked their lives when they came out in the *llano*; they could take the consequences. As for the Comanches, Jimmy Gallant hated them with a bitterness that was a flame. Of them all only Bigote might have laid a claim upon him, and Bigote was dead. Jimmy Gallant did not think consciously of these things as he rode north. He considered no logic, made no defense of what he had done. He was filled only with a high, wild, savage exultation.

Gradually the feeling left him. There was yet anxiety and danger. He had led the Comanches and Comancheros together but could not prophesy the outcome. He was scarcely in better case, even with the extra horse and lasso. He could hardly take Miguel and Gale to Tafoya's carretas. The Comanches might be driven off, or again, they might destroy Tafoya. They might charge, recoil, and finding the cost too great, leave the carts. Again they might hang on for days. Familiarity made Jimmy Gallant sure that he could not predict the savage mind. How Lovato and the rest reacted depended on circumstances, on Tafoya's readiness, the hardihood of the Comancheros, on a hundred things. A problem still confronted him: he must win to safety with Miguel and Gale. They were his care, his charges; his decision would determine. Now again his white heritage showed in the young man. An Indian would have taken each day as it came, but Jimmy Gallant tried to plan ahead. Still, engrossed as he was, his eyes searched the country and his ears were alert. From the south came the faint popping of guns telling him that the enemies were yet engaged. Jimmy looked back and saw nothing; he turned his head and mounting a long swell of prairie, dropped into a draw. A mile behind him two riders lifted from the grass and came on apace.

Lovato and Negrito, faces painted for war, torsos bare, Lovato armed with lance and shield and knife, Negrito with knife and shield and bow, followed as remorselessly as bloodhounds.

Sheer fury brought the two upon Jimmy Gallant's trail. Even in that first wild surprise when the pursuing Comanches smashed into the carretas, Lovato had not lost sight of Jimmy Gallant. He had seen the boy go through the line of carts and circle toward the west, but then a Comanchero, rising up, had busied the chieftain. There had been brisk fighting for a time, exchange of arrow fire with gunfire, a whirling melee of carts and horses, oxen and men. Then, as Tafoya's followers made good their cart corral, the Comanches fought clear and drawing out of gunshot, held consultation.

Indians are individuals and a chief such as Lovato exercised only nominal authority. There were others in the band carrying almost as much weight as he—old Varsote and Lame Bull and others. These drew together with Lovato to decide the next move. Varsote had been against trailing the dun horse from the first. There was no profit in tracking down three plunderless fugitives such as El Gato, a girl and a young New Mexican. Varsote, with an eye to the main chance had been all for following Tafoya and stealing from him. Lame Bull, too, had been inclined

in that direction. Still, in this instance, Lovato's authority had carried. They had found the dun buffalo horse of El Gato, and the dun's trail was plain on the freshly wetted prairie. El Gato had flouted them, had stolen their prisoners, upset their lodges, stampeded their horses and broken up their drinking and ruined their liquor. The young braves accepted Lovato's leadership and they took the trail of the dun horse.

Then Jimmy Gallant had appeared and the wolf blood rose to heat. Lovato, Negrito, Varsote, Lame Bull, old and young alike, had taken up that chase. They had fought, all of them, in the first shock of the meeting with the Comancheros; surprised or not they were adept at fighting. They came through the first sharp encounter but not without damage. Moyah was killed and two young men with him. Three others bore wounds. The Comanches recoiled and took counsel. They met just as Jimmy Gallant, leading Moyah's horse, topped the rise and paused. It was Negrito who saw him there and called all to view.

LOVATO would have taken up the pursuit at once. Jimmy Gallant had knocked Lovato down and stolen his slave, and altogether had made something of a fool of the chief. Hatred and a desire for personal revenge made the Comanche wild, and Negrito seconded his father. But Varsote, Lame Bull and other older heads would have none of it. Here were the carts, here were horses and cattle and plunder. The first meeting had been costly and men were killed, but still the plunder remained. They could, Varsote counseled, gain more here on the road to Mucho Que, then by any wild chase after a single man. And El Gato's medicine was good; he had led them into what was nearly a trap. Best leave him alone. What were three scalps compared to the gain possible here? Lovato argued and ranted and raved and got nowhere. The others would not follow and so, with Negrito alone, the Comanche chief set out.

They did not hurry. There were hours of daylight left and they knew that the man they pursued would lead them just where they wished to go. Somewhere to the north were two more scalps, or a scalp and a woman captive. Lovato desired the girl, and vengeance; Negrito desired vengeance. They kept their quarry in sight, watching rider and lead horse top one rise before they themselves topped the rise that concealed them. They rode alert, bloodthirsty and ready, sure of their prey. Behind them the others, taking the counsel of Lame Bull and Varsote, made a ragged circle around the wagons, penning the Comancheros close while a few of their number boldly gathered horses and cattle into a herd and drove them toward the east.

Jimmy Gallant, on Moyah's horse, was surprised at the short distance he had to go. The chase had seemed long and yet not an hour after he rode his circle about Tafoya's carretas, he was recognizing the country and knew that he approached the spot where Miguel and Gale waited. He came down the long slant to the game trail and saw the girl rise. Lifting his hand he called a greeting and she ran out to meet him. Her eyes were wide as she arrived and pointing to the roan demanded: "Where did you get that horse? What happened?"

Miguel was propped up against the bank, his color improved, seeming more strong than when Jimmy left him. He added his questions to Gale's.

Dismounting, Jimmy hobbled the horses. This was his hour and squatting beside Miguel he grinned and launched into the tale of his adventures. He told of seeing the Comanches, of how he had ridden, all unseen, until he was close; he told of the chase, of finding Tafoya's carts and leading the Comanches to them. He did not see Miguel's eyes widen. He was enjoying himself, just as any savage might.

"But they had no warning!" Miguel exclaimed. "You brought the Comanches down on Tafoya without warning him. *Amigo mio,* that was bad. You might have . . ."

"There was no time!" Jimmy interrupted.

"What is he telling?" Gale demanded. "What did he do?"

Briefly, keeping his eyes on Jimmy's face, Miguel interpreted. The girl's expression changed. "Then they can't come," she exclaimed. "They can't help us. What will we do?"

In Spanish Miguel posed the question. Jimmy Gallant shrugged. "I will get meat," he said. "We can cook it. And we have two horses. Maybe I can get another horse. His eyes flickered toward the south. "Then we can go on. If you eat meat you will be strong and can ride."

"What does he say?" Gale demanded. "What . . .?" She was facing the men and, looking above their heads over the shallow bank, she screamed. Miguel tried to lift himself and turn, but was too weak. Jimmy Gallant did not turn.

Reacting swiftly as a cat Jimmy flung himself to the left and an arrow hissed over the spot he had occupied. Miguel was down and under his hand Jimmy felt the hard butt of the pistol. He came up, still cat-like, and Gale ran toward him. Above them, not thirty feet away, were Lovato and Negrito! Negrito with an arrow fitted to his bowstring, the bow bent, Lovato with his lance lowered, bull-hide shield swung across his body. Under Jimmy Gallant's thumb the hammer of the pistol came back to full cock. His left hand swept out, forcing Gale back and down. Negrito's bowstring twanged and the arrow sang its wicked song, but in Jimmy's hand the pistol roared and recoiled. Shot squarely through the body, Negrito caught at his saddle pommel, swayed and, as the frightened horse wheeled, fell sprawling.

Jimmy Gallant did not see Negrito go down. He dropped the pistol at its discharge and his hand flew to his knife. Lovato, charging, was almost upon him, the long steel head of the lance dipped to take his life. It was knife against lance, youngster against seasoned warrior.

SWIFT as were the charge and the dipping lance, Jimmy Gallant was swifter. The lance flashed by as he dodged and Lovato, master horseman, recovered and wheeled the pinto, ready for another charge. He had counted on Jimmy Gallant's moving, trying to escape. His estimate was wrong. True, Jimmy had dodged the lance point, but only to spring back, as the fine steel blade of a rapier might spring back from a parry. Jimmy's left hand shot up, caught the pommel as Lovato passed. His legs, steel springs, lifted him and, hold on the pommel released, as a man might mount behind another, so now Jimmy Gallant dropped behind Lovato's saddle. His left arm wrapped about Lovato's neck. The Comanche's scream was cut off, ending in a choking gasp. Miguel and Gale, unable to move, paralyzed by the swift action, saw Jimmy's steel-tipped right arm rise and come down, rise and fall again, the knife blade dark. The frightened pinto ran, bucking madly, and a man dropped off, staggered and came to his feet. Jimmy Gallant! The pinto bucked a few steps more and now, as inert as a pack, Lovato fell sprawling from the saddle, arms outstretched. As he struck the sod, Jimmy ran swiftly forward, dropped down, and once again the knife lifted and was thrust home, while a yell—wild and fierce and triumphant—filled the air. Gale Baylor hid her face in her hands and her shoulders shook with fright and the shock of the thing she had seen. Time passed, then a quiet voice said, *"Es todo."*

The girl lifted her eyes. Jimmy Gallant stood looking down at her and at Miguel. The savagery was gone from his face, leaving it young and stern and quiet. He stood erect, only a long red scratch across his chest below the dangling silver cross of Saint Andrew showing how narrowly Lovato's lance had missed. That deep chest rose and fell evenly and the blue eyes glittered under their black brows. The girl glanced down and gasped. There, dangling from Jimmy's right hand was a long lock of hair and, as she gazed horror stricken, a drop of blood fell from the scalp and spatted sharply on the ground. Again the girl hid her eyes, unable to look.

"They . . . they are dead?" Miguel asked. "They . . .?"

"Es todo," Jimmy Gallant rasped. "That is all!"

That night a fire burned in the little depression made by the old game trail. It was a clear and smokeless fire made from *bois de vacas* and over it Jimmy Gallant toasted chunks of dried meat that he had found in a pouch on Negrito's saddle. Against the cut bank were a cased bow and a quiver of arrows, a long-bladed lance and a buffalo-hide shield with tufts of hair about its edge. Saddles rested by the bank, and in the darkness a hobbled horse moved to fresh grazing. Close to the saddles was a pile of grass covered by the skin of a

mountain lion, a coveted saddle blanket among the Comanches, and on this Miguel Alcazar reposed. Beyond Miguel, just at the edge of the firelight, was another bed of grass and blankets, two of them, a wolf skin and a buffalo robe. Gale Baylor sat upon this bed and watched the man at the fire.

"*Manana* . . ."Jimmy Gallant concluded his speech.

"But Tafoya . . ." Miguel began.

"No." Jimmy Gallant turned the meat as he answered.

"What does he say?" Gale asked.

"He says that tomorrow he will kill a buffalo or an antelope," Miguel answered. his voice weary. "Then we will have meat. He says that I will be able to ride and that we will go."

"But . . ." the girl expostulated, "I thought that we would join your friends."

"He says not." Miguel shook his head. "He says that we will go alone."

Rising from beside the fire Jimmy Gallant advanced, two pieces of meat on his knife blade. He tendered the first to Miguel and the young New Mexican took it, shifting it from hand to hand, for the meat was hot. Turning, Jimmy advanced toward the girl, a savage, matchless picture. From the belt at his waist the holstered pistol dangled, and fastened to the holster was Lovato's scalp. The girl recoiled from the out-held knife. She had seen that knife in action, had seen it drink life; and here on its tip was proffered her supper.

"I . . . I can't," she gasped, and Jimmy turned questioning eyes to Miguel.

"Take it," Miguel commanded, and the girl reached out a trembling hand. Grunting his approbation, Jimmy returned to the fire. Squatting there he impaled another piece of dried meat on his knife and began to toast it. Tentatively, her repugnance overcome by the crisp odor of the meat, Gale Baylor took a taste. It was hot and good.

"But," she began, "I don't understand. "Why can't we find your friends? Why can't we go with them?"

Miguel, engrossed with his own eating, forgot his wound and tried to shrug. Sharp pain reminded him and he grimaced. "Neither do I understand," he answered. "But we will go with him. He will take us and we will be safe." He glanced admiringly toward the man at the fire, and, though unwilling her eyes followed and she began to understand.

JIMMY GALLANT turned the meat, toasting its other side. It was good meat and there was more. He had the meat and he had weapons—a bow, arrows, a lance, and the little gun. He had horses, enough to transport them all, and saddles and robes. There was water on the plains; there was meat and fuel to cook it. No need to look for help; they could be sufficient unto themselves, and safe enough, too. The Comanches, having restolen stock to care for, would not search the plains for a party of three. The Comancheros, robbed of their profits and without trade goods, would return to Nuevo Mejico and certainly spend no time in search.

Jimmy turned the meat again and, judging it done, bit into it. As he rose up from his crouch, the scalp, dangling from the pistol holster, brushed against his leg, reminding him. Lovato's scalp. There would be others there. He would see these people safe, this girl and this friend he had gained. He would go back to his own kind, back to the white man. And then . . . and then . . .

"*Manana,*" Jimmy Gallant said. "Tomorrow." And his eyes, looking out into the night, into the future, caught the firelight and were blue and fierce.

"*Manana,*" he promised.

The Nez Perce Napoleon!—CHIEF JOSEPH

By ROBERT R. RICHARDS

Bred to the ways of peace was Chief Joseph. But harsh government orders rankled . . . and this brilliant young Nez Perce leader developed into the deadliest, most cunning foe the U.S. Cavalry ever was called on to subdue.

HIN - MAH - TOO - YAH - LAT - KEKT, Thunder Rolling In The Mountains, that was the handsome Indian's name. But to the white men he was simply Joseph, son of the old Nez Perce chief. As Joseph rode into the clearing, the thin, long line of his lips bespoke determination. One by one the other Indian tribes had fallen, and now the Nez Perce's turn had come. The white man must be faced at council. The old blind chief dispatched his son.

The government agent smiled. Youth would be easier to deal with than stubborn old age. The magnificently built Indian towered above the government agent. His slant eyes were alert, bright, already steeped in wisdom. Grimly, he said, "I do not like this council. I have come only to save blood, both red and white."

The smile vanished from the agent's face. Joseph would not be won over so easily.

The agent perceived the futility of hemming and hawing with so direct a man. Authority was the only thing this Indian would understand. "The Great White Chief at Washington orders the removal of your tribe from Winding Waters to the Lapwai Reservation," the agent stated flatly. "You have no choice, you *must* move to the reservation."

"I will not," Joseph replied calmly, gazing at his braves. "We have always lived peacefully in the Wallowa Valley. There is much other land for white faces. We have signed no treaties and accepted no presents from the government. We have always welcomed white men and never attacked settlers. Winding Waters is ours, we shall defend it as long as a single drop of Indian blood warms our hearts."

The braves looked pridefully at Joseph. The agent flushed. If only they had sent him to deal with some really savage tribe. The Nez Perces had been models of peace since the days of Lewis and Clark. The government man tried a new approach. He spoke of aid, valuable gifts, and the protection which would be extended towards them.

Joseph listened carefully, remembering the words of his father. "*Take nothing from the white man.*" Once again he spoke, pronouncing each word with deadly calm. "Keep your gifts. We have much horses and cattle to sell. We can buy the white man's treasures if we desire. We are capable of protecting ourselves and the land and graves of our fathers. No reservation can be large enough for those who love freedom."

The agent stared in disbelief at the handsome young Indian. The redskin's logic was shatter-proof. A mere threat was no proper answer to the civilized approach of Joseph. If only he had been a fierce and excitable Indian. If only his tribe would give them some excuse to take over Winding Waters other than mere desire for possession. The settlers had demanded the government take over. The government itself was hesitant. Prominent generals sided with the Nez Perces. But the pressure of the settlers was strong.

The old blind chief wept with pride when they told him of Joseph's proud and intelligent stand before the shrewd white men. The old man died soon after. He begged his son never to capitulate. The plea was unnecessary. The new Chief Joseph was determined to hold Winding Waters. Other Nez Perces sold their lands, traded them, or simply accepted removal. But Chief Joseph and his tribe remained adamant. His logic before the white men was devasting, the peaceful

record of his tribe without blemish. He carried his cause to Congress, and spoke in Washington before government representatives with the same calm poise he had exhibited in his meeting with the agent on the Idaho plains.

Paradoxically enough, General O. O. Howard, one of the military men who sided with Joseph, eventually led government forces against him. But that came after the council meetings at Fort Lapwai, station for the Indian reservation. It was situated in a beautiful valley, superior to Winding Waters. But the last of the Nez Perces preferred the freedom of poorer lands, to the confinement and su-

pervision of richer government territories.

For fourteen years Chief Joseph negotiated his dispute with the government without a drop of blood being spilled on either side. He was certain, that if he continued his unanswerable logic and peace, the settlers would eventually move on, and Winding Waters would remain with the Nez Perces forever.

THERE was only one cog in the wheel of Joseph's patient logic. Too-Hool-Hool-Suit, a Nez Perce prophet and priest. During a stormy meeting with Gen. Howard on May 7, 1877, the prophet carried on like a madman. He dashed between the General and Joseph, his eyes blazing, his fists raised, and proceeded to orate at the top of his voice. He predicted an Indian Messiah rising in the East, trumpeting his bugle and raising all the Indian dead on the American continent. "With these braves we shall go forward and destroy every last white face," he proclaimed.

The Nez Perces were stirred by the prophet's dramatic picture. Chief Joseph's anger was second only to that of Gen. Howard's. The General placed Too-Hool-Hool-Suit under arrest. The Indians glowered around the council table. The armed braves were ready to smash at Fort Lapwai and free their prophet. Chief Joseph saw fourteen years of painstaking negotiation going up in smoke because of a single madman's tirade. He counseled his men against taking arms. Open warfare would destroy the last chance of winning by peaceful means.

Infuriated by the prophet's tirade, General Howard decided to close all negotiations. Another outburst like this and the Indians would be on his neck. "Chief Joseph, I give you exactly thirty days in which to remove your entire tribe to the reservation. If your people are not on the reserve within that time, armed government forces will be called into action."

Joseph thought it over. He had promised to defend Winding Waters. But in the ensuing years he had watched one tribe after another taste defeat. What good was defense if all his people were killed?

The Chief asked an extension of time from the General. "The Snake River will be too high for crossing. In the fall it will be low." Once again Joseph's logic asserted itself. But Howard, desiring to deal swiftly with the situation, and afraid that agreement might display weakness on his part, flatly and bluntly refused the wise Indian's request. The problem of crossing a river ignited the most stubbornly fought campaign in the long list of clashes between government and Indian.

The Nez Perces moved through a driving rain towards the Snake River within the thirty day limit. Livestock, possessions, had been hastily assembled. The braves were broken hearted when they said goodbye to Winding Waters. A private war party was assembled countermanding Joseph's voice. They favored instant attack upon the government forces. Chief Joseph traded logic for a gun this time. He rode among his men, swearing to shoot the first one who killed or fired at a soldier. The grumbling warriors respected their leader too much for revolt.

When they reached the Snake River, the waters were treacherously deep. Swollen and fed for days by driving rain. Many cattle were left behind with a token guard on the opposite bank. The Nez Perces crossed the turbulent river only to hear shots.

Settlers attacked the token forces and stole the cattle. The Indians refused to follow their Chief to the reservation. And Joseph, himself, underwent a change of mind. Blood had been spilled, cattle stolen. Where was the government's protection? There was nothing left to do but fight. "We must not attack the settlers," Joseph warned. "All arms and strength should be thrown against the government forces. If we kill settlers, what is left of our peaceable cause will be destroyed. Everybody will be against us."

The war council defeated Joseph's proposal. The Indians raided the settler's camps. Several of them had grudges against particular white men. These men were killed first. White men crumpled before arrows all along the Camas Prairie to Mount Idaho. Joseph protested these murders, he did not believe in revenge no matter what the settlers had done. He hammered it into his warriors that every last resource would be required to defeat the regular army. They were fighting to retain their lands, not to even personal

scores. Joseph was in complete command after this tongue lashing.

Faced with the actuality of tangling with heavily armed government forces, the men listened to the calm words of the Indian logician. Chief Joseph ordered his braves into White Bird Canyon for their first stand. Women and children were deposited safely beyond them across the wafers of the Salmon River.

The Nez Perce leader divided his sixty warriors, placing one half under the command of White Bird. They buried themselves behind ridges, rocks and hollows as Joseph and his scouts kept an all night vigil. The keen eyed chief was the first to spot Col. Berry and his regulars descending the wide trail on the canyon's rim. One hundred heavily armed men marched between the Chief's and White Bird's men. Then suddenly rocks, hollows and ridges came alive with redskins. The soldiers were caught in a concentrated cross-fire of Indian arrows and bullets. In a few minutes one third of them were dead. The others retreated for their lives while Chief Joseph ordered a pursuit.

Chief Joseph fiercely opposed any displays of brutality and his men followed him to the letter. Not a single soldier was scalped, nor a wounded man killed, nor a dead one mutilated. The army was chased over a twelve mile trail, Joseph ordering the pursuit ended within four miles of Mount Idaho.

It was a smashing and astonishing victory for the Indians. The military were amazed, aghast at the overwhelming defeat of well trained troops.

General Howard waited impatiently at Fort Lapwai for reinforcements. Having met Chief Joseph on several occasions he had considerable respect for the redskin leader.

But the general was positive that no amount of strategy, cunning, and clever Indian fighting, could stand up against a large detachment of trained troops equipped with cannons. He expected strong resistance, especially since Chief Joseph's warriors were now joined by Chief Looking-Glass' men, another band of Nez Perces who were inspired by Joseph's fight.

General Howard, with over four hundred men under his command, set out to engage Joseph in what he felt would be the last battle of the war. The Nez Perces numbered no more than three hundred, their equipment was ridiculous compared to trained columns of red shirted cavalrymen, artillery, and well disciplined infantry.

CHIEF JOSEPH pulled another surprise. He moved to the edges of the Indian reservation and set up rock breastworks on Clearwater River. He was ready to engage his one time friend right on the reservation that General Howard had ordered him to!

He watched from a high vantage point as the orderly line of soldiers poured towards the Clearwater. Instantly Joseph noticed their supply trains in the rear were left unguarded. Instead of the expected frontal attack, the Nez Perce strategist dispatched thirty warriors to destroy the supply train. The fast moving Indians swooped down on the supply train. Howard quickly shifted his cavalry. The Indians damaged the small train, failed to destroy the large one, and immediately raced back to their own formation. The keystone of Joseph's campaigns was based on sparing the lives of his own men while killing the enemy. He favored cleverness, feints and deception over bloody, suicidal attacks.

If he were capable of rendering the enemy helpless, rather than murdering men, he would have preferred it at all times. There wasn't an ounce of savagery in Chief Joseph's bones.

The battle raged through the afternoon. Charge and counter-charge, feint and counter-feint, Joseph met the army's trained skill with equal skill. Considering his lack of equipment he did better. In the second day of fighting General Howard had gained no advantage. It seemed incredible that a mere Indian, undermanned, and under-equipped, without benefit of West Point training could employ such deft strategy and handle his troops with such astonishing skill.

More cavalry continued to pour in from Fort Lapwai and reinforce Howard's hard fighting troops. Finally an all-out attack was ordered by the general, one calculated to smash Joseph's resistance to smithereens. A steady cannonade was con-

centrated on Joseph's left flank which showed weakness. The Nez Perces fought furiously from behind their rock barriers. Squaws took up rifles and bow and arrows in a desperate attempt to aid their hard pressed warriors.

But the might of cannon, heavy artillery, and superior forces broke the Nez Perce's defenses. The Indians retreated beyond the Clearwater. Charging cavalry leaped over the stone breastworks as they headed for the camp. No sooner were they on the Clearwater's banks than Chief Joseph delivered the master stroke. A huge body of warriors appeared on the army's right wing. Instantly the cavalry prepared for a head on clash with these Indians. Cannons were turned from the camp to face the new menace.

The head on clash never did come, for Joseph never intended such. The braves threatening the right wing were a mere decoy. While General Howard readied to fight them, the hard pressed warriors who had retreated from the left, gained time to gather all their supplies and disappear into the deep woods.

Chief Joseph quickly withdrew his decoys. The feint had worked perfectly. Infuriated, General Howard drove his troops into the woods. Cannon and heavy artillery were useless among the thick trees. Joseph's rear guard harassed the soldiers with constant attacks. General Howard gave the whole thing up in disgust and allowed the Nez Perces to withdraw without further chase. Had he pursued, his army would have been destroyed piecemeal.

On paper Chief Joseph had been defeated, technically his warriors had been routed. But in his heart General Howard knew Joseph had licked him. The shrewd strategy of the Nez Perce leader was spoken of with awe in military circles. Every commander in the region, with a sizable force, that is, was anxious to get a crack at Joseph. The man who licked the Indian would have defeated a worthy foe.

As far as Joseph and the Nez Perces were concerned the war was over. The most powerful government forces failed to destroy them or herd them on to a reservation. Joseph headed for the buffalo country with his tribe. Chief Looking-Glass and his men remained with him. Their admiration for the young leader was unbounded.

Joseph's reputation for peace and fair play paid dividends along with his newly earned military honors. The commander of a small fort on the Lou-Lou hesitated to engage the Nez Perces. When the settlers themselves came to Joseph's defense and refused to take arms against them, the commander paid his respects to the great Indian leader and wished him luck in the buffalo country.

The white settlers of Stevensville and Corvallis had no quarrel with Joseph. They welcomed his Indians and traded with them. Although they knew he had fought against the government forces, they had known Chief Joseph in the long years of peace.

IF THE people weren't against him the government certainly was. General Howard was sworn to drive his valiant warriors on to a reservation. Joseph took no chances. He left a spy at Corvallis and moved into the buffalo country. The weeks passed without even the faintest sign of an army man.

In the meantime General Gibbon was dispatched from Helena, Montana, with two hundred cavalrymen, having received orders to bring Joseph in. Gibbon trailed the Indians, concentrating on taking them by surprise.

An hour before dawn General Gibbon and his men swept into Joseph's camp in a furious, surprise charge. The Nez Perce leader quickly took control of the situation. His counter-charge was commanded with equal fury and greater surprise. Gibbon hadn't expected a well organized counter. The camp was recaptured with lightning speed and Gibbon's men were driven into the surrounding woods.

General Gibbon played his trump card. He had sacrificed power for speed. Now he ordered his men back to camp for the big guns they had left behind. The clever Joseph was clairvoyant. When Gibbon's men returned for the hidden cannons, they found the guns damaged beyond use and all the powder and lead missing.

A nineteen hour battle resulted in a redskin victory. Gibbon was wounded,

his command shot to pieces, his cavalry confused and battered by the dazzling feinting tactics of Chief Joseph. The Nez Perces beat an orderly retreat, leaving General Gibbon and his wounded on the battlefield. Under Joseph's orders no advantage was taken of them. As usual the injured were not killed, the living scalped, nor the dead mutilated.

When General Howard arrived at the battlefield Gibbon told him of the Nez Perce leader's unbelievably clever tactics. Howard nodded knowingly. Chief Joseph had eluded him again. Three major encounters with government troops and Joseph was still on the loose, distinguishing himself with each battle.

Joseph was not happy over his latest victory. Chief Looking-Glass had perished in the fight. More braves were dead, more blood flowed, the war was continuing. General Howard's Indian scouts, Bannocks, had dug up the Nez Perce graves left on the battlefield, mutilated, and scalped the corpses. Joseph was saddened when the news reached him. "And we are the savages who must be placed on a reservation?" he commented bitterly.

General Howard doggedly followed Joseph's trail. No matter how swiftly he moved the Indians were swifter. They were on the Yellowstone, pushing across the continental divide into Idaho again. Howard conceived of a strategy to block them. Knowing the redskins would move through Tacher's Pass, the general dispatched a lieutenant and a squad of cavalrymen to hold the Pass until he arrived.

But the Nez Perce chief was not to be bottled. Imitating the military formation of army men, Joseph sent his braves at the lieutenant's camp. The army sentinels, squinting through the dark, assuming the formation consisted of soldiers, were not alerted until the braves were on top of them. Joseph had instructed his men to replenish supplies, not fight. Wild whoops and guns shot overhead stampeded the animals and the government was soon minus considerable horses and mules. If the lieutenant hoped to guard the Pass, he would have to walk it. Once again General Howard had been thwarted.

It was early fall. The leaves were turning. The first frost was in the air. Chief Joseph and his men were now reported to be in Montana. For a second time Howard had given up pursuit, and for a third time another General made a bid to capture the Nez Perce leader and break the Indians' power.

JOSEPH'S latest foe was General Sturgis, fresh from the Powder River country with 350 cavalrymen hell-bent for action. Sturgis knew why the others had failed. They had employed Indian scouts, not Indian fighters. The general rectified that mistake by recruiting Crows. The Nez Perces were in for a double dose of army and redskin fighting.

Oh, but it was ridiculous, it was fantastic, it ended with bitter irony . . . this stalking of the canny Nez Perce strategist. Chief Joseph tied General Sturgis into knots without firing a shot. Sturgis, his crack cavalry, his Indian fighters, all of them chased the Nez Perce chief from one side of the territory to the other without even catching a Nez Perce donkey.

And the crowning touch, the mocking irony of it all, came just as Sturgis thought he had Joseph. Through false trails, phony smoke signals, fake trail signs, the great General Sturgis was thrown far from his objective. Joseph was laughing dozens of miles away while Sturgis ended up in a place called Stinking Water!

Five months after that first battle in White Bird canyon, Chief Joseph, his two wives, his daughter, his brother Ollacut, White Bird, and all his braves, squaws and their children had pitched camp in the beautiful Snake Creek country, near the headwaters of the Missouri, and exactly one day's ride from the Canadian border. Three generals had chased him nearly two thousand miles without success through spring, summer and fall.

In Washington, the Great White Chieftain, President U. S. Grant, puffed vigorously and unhappily on a cigar as he read the accounts of the elusive Joseph. Was there no one who could capture the canny redskin warrior?

Joseph finally received word from his scouts that a fourth general was closing in on him with an army! The warning came a few minutes before the actual attack led by General N. A. Miles of Fort Keough.

Joseph ordered his men into the ravines.

In the semi-dark among the dank rocks they awaited the onslaught. Miles was shrewd enough to drive a wedge between the Nez Perces, splitting the camp in half. The price he paid was having one-fifth of his army wiped out while Joseph lost scarcely a man.

The fighting was bitter. Miles was astonished at the accuracy of Joseph's gunfighters, his clever maneuvers, his uncanny method of conserving men and making one brave do the work of four. But General Miles succeeded in doing one thing all the others had failed at—ringing Joseph's camp, surrounding them completely, shutting them off in the ravine. This was one that even the wily Peaceful Warrior couldn't slip out of.

After days and nights of incessant fighting Joseph dispatched a messenger to Sitting Bull, who lay encamped on the Canadian border with twelve hundred fierce Sioux under his command. The Nez Perce courier sneaked through the enemy lines. Sitting Bull heard the message but he didn't stir from his roost. The attempt to save Chief Joseph was too great a risk for Sitting Bull.

Joseph, the Peaceful Warrior, fought on without aid. There was no hope of victory, only escape into Bear Paw Mountain. But women, children and the wounded could never breech the enemy lines. Joseph and his braves could have made it. The ever resourceful Nez Perce had figured out a means of penetrating the enemy lines, one by one, through the cold, dark ravines. It was dangerous, almost suicide, except for the fleetest warriors and the finest shots. That the Chief himself could have made it, there was no doubt.

But it was bitterly cold, there was no food, the blankets were gone, the old were dead, the young were being wounded by the hour.

Ollacut, brother of Joseph, was already dead and awaiting burial in the cold, rocky earth. White Bird had already given up, escaping during the night with a band of men. Joseph chastised none of them. He expected no man to stay in the furious life-and-death battle unless he chose to do so by his own volition. The Chief's daughter had gone with White Bird and the braves, all of them seeking the sanctuary of Sitting Bull on the border.

General Howard arrived and joined General Miles. The Peaceful Warrior could stand it no longer. But still he did not beg for surrender. He demanded first a guarantee that they be allowed to keep their horses, cattle and possessions once they entered Lapwai Reservation. Miles complied with his request.

Chief Joseph stepped forward, his handsome, towering figure erect with solemn dignity. He placed his rifle slowly in General Mile's hands while General Howard stared in disbelief. It still didn't seem possible that Joseph had been captured. Once again Howard heard the calm voice, the unerring logic. "I am tired of fighting. My leaders are dead. My brother has joined them. It is cold and there are no blankets. The little children freeze. The women suffer. The young are wounded and we are without food. My own children are lost to me. Perhaps they are among the uncounted dead. Hear me, my chiefs. I am tired; my heart is sick and sad. From where the sun now stands I will fight no more against the white man forever."

President U. S. Grant breathed a sigh of relief. But it was no reflection on the military staff that the Peaceful Warrior had been difficult to capture. Now that the campaign was over and the records were studied objectively, the militarists agreed that Chief Joseph was the equal of Grant and Lee as a strategist. That famous old Civil War General, William Tecumseh Sherman, came out with unstinting praise for Joseph's ability.

Twenty-seven years after this stubbornly contested Indian war a pair of old men sat at a banquet table and drank to each other.

The occasion was the commencement exercises at Carlisle Indian College. Chief Joseph and General Howard clinked glasses and toasted each other's health. Since the surrender they had seen much of each other and had become warm friends. So ended the bitter rivalry between the Indian who didn't want to fight, and the white General who unknowingly forced Chief Joseph, The Peaceful Warrior, into becoming one of the greatest strategists the old frontier has ever seen.

BRAND Of The RED WARRIOR

By IKE BOONE

Many scalps of the enemy once graced Cheyenne coup-sticks. But now Two Bears' people were beset by sickness. They were tired and hungry . . . and even Two Bears himself, once the proudest of warriors, felt his courage wavering at the advance of the swift-charging Long-Knives.

TWO BEARS DUCKED out the flap of his lodge and stood a moment, feeling the bite of the cold wind, sharp and bitter to his old bones. He shrugged the blanket about his shoulders as he turned toward the river. Two of the women came up over the rise of the bank with a kettle of water between them, and they moved slowly, showing their tiredness. The snow came to the knees of his fringed leggins as he stepped out of the single trampled trail to the

watering place.

And slowly and insidiously the thought formed in his protesting mind, *The Spirit has turned his face from my people.*

His eyes searched the sky with unconscious wisdom, and told him that the end of the snow and the cold was not yet, and he turned back toward the camp. It was a poor camp. Eighteen lodges, huddled in a rough circle, with snow banked about their feet; poor lodges, for they were patched and laced with rawhide, but there had been no buffalo for hides to renew them, and not enough hunters, if there had been buffalo, for the Spotted Death had run through the tribe like a great blind knife.

He trudged back through the heavy, hampering snow to the trail, and then feet thudded behind him, and an excited voice shouted his name. He turned, and saw his grandson, Little Knife, a lad of 14 summers, who came plunging through the deep snow where the trail curved.

Almost instantly that Two Bear's eyes came on him, Little Knife slowed his pace to a sedate walk, but the words burst from the hard breath of his running.

"The Long Knives, my grandfather! The Long Knives come in blue coats! Just beyond the ridge!"

And almost on the heels of his words, they did come, first a single rider, who loomed up, sharp-cut and black, against the dull gray of the threatening sky, and then a file of them, pulling up along the line of the ridge, halting their mounts, to sit stiff and square in their saddles, with a dull gleaming of buttons.

Then one rider broke from the group and came down the slope, slouching easily in the saddle as his pony kicked a spray of snow ahead of its sliding hooves.

Two Bears turned and walked slowly to the outer circle of the lodges, then stopped and turned again to face the rider, who took the shallow ford of the river in plunging leaps, the horny hooves of the pony making a great crashing in the ice of the edges. He knew the rider now; Burden Frazee, and the uneasiness inside him subsided.

BURDEN HELD his pipe out before him with one hand. He rode up within ten feet of Two Bears before he pulled up and slid out of the saddle. Two Bears reached his own pipe, which hung on a thong around his neck, inside the blanket, and held it out toward Burden who grinned and stepped forward.

"My brother, Buffalo Man, is welcome to my lodge," said Two Bears formally, using Burden's Indian name.

Burden Frazee grunted polite acknowledgement, and followed Two Bears to the lodge, his keen blue eyes missing nothing of the patched and tattered poverty of the camp. One side of his mouth quirked under his wiry sandy beard, though he made no sound. But Two Bears knew he saw, and inside his chest a shamed anger grew that his white blood-brother should see him thus.

But he made no sign of this, and when Burden was seated at his left in the lodge, and the pipe had been lighted and smoked, Two Bears waited.

Burden Frazee—Buffalo Man—spoke with a blunt voice that was near anger. "My heart is heavy," he said. "The Long Knives come with peace in their mouths and war in their hands." His blue eyes flicked at Two Bears and then away. The edge was sharp in his voice now. "They come for the young men who stole the horses of the black trader."

"They were our horses," replied Two Bears calmly.

Frazee did not dispute this; did not even say "maybe," for that would be calling Two Bears a liar. He said instead, "The black trader died, and the Long Knives have come for the young men."

"The black trader fought them," said Two Bears. "When a man fights he must expect to die. Else why does a man fight? Besides, what will the Long Knives do with the young men?"

Burden shrugged, as Two Bears might have done, for he was as much red as white. "Perhaps they will lock them up for a time," he said, but his voice did not carry much conviction.

"They will hang them by their necks," said Two Bears. He did not say it as if he disputed Burden. It was simply that Two Bears remembered what had happened once before.

"No," said Two Bears. "The young men are needed here." For the first time a little of his inner bitterness came out.

"We are poor," he said simply, shaming himself before Buffalo Man who was his brother, "we have not enough hunters to feed us now. If the young men go, we die."

Frazee looked down and his blue eyes were cloudy. Then he lifted his head and pointed with his chin at the line of cavalry on the ridge.

"They have come for the young men," he said bitterly. "Believe me, my brother, I did not know it was my brothers they sought when I joined with them."

His eyes fell away from Two Bears', and looked at his crossed knees. "If the young men do not go with me, the Long Knives will come after them. They carry war in their hands. There will be wailing in the lodge of my brother."

Two Bears digested this in silence. He knew the bitterness and anger in Buffalo Man's voice was not for him. Buffalo Man was his brother. They had hunted together in the old days when only the mountain men knew this land. Burden's woman had been Two Bear's sister, and they had shared their meat and their fires. But even when the beaver went away, and the mountain men had quit trapping, more white men came, and the Spotted Death came with them, and the buffalo went away, and still the white men came.

Now Two Bear's people were only eighteen lodges, and they were hungry. And Two Bears knew, deep inside him, that he was old, and tired, and afraid. The cold was inside him, drying up his courage. Twenty years ago—ten—and he would have given them their answer straight. He would have ridden at these arrogant Long Knives, chanting his war song, with the young men at his back, and if he died, he died like a man, in battle.

So all he had left was stubbornness, and he said slowly, "The young men will not go with you."

Burden did not argue. He shrugged, and rose. "My heart is heavy for my brother," he said. "I will tell the leader of the Long Knives."

He ducked out of the lodge and swung into his saddle, and rode out without looking back.

Little Knife sprang up from the side of the lodge where he had been sitting, forbidden to take part in the talk because he was not yet a man, and he cried, "Do we fight the Long Knives then, my grandfather?"

Two Bears stared at the flickering of the tiny fire before him, and he felt the old heat coming inside him. The heat that had been in him years back when he had led his men against the Crows and the Arapahoes; but he knew dismally that his muscles were old and weak now, and a doubt he had never had before was coming, along with the heat. He sighed, hating the age that hampered his body, and he spoke slowly.

"Tell the women to make bundles of the robes and skins and food. Tell them not to touch the lodges. Tell the boys to move the horses back into the trees—but slowly, slowly, so the Long Knives will not think they are running. And bring Yellow Ear and Bright Wolf here. I would speak to them."

BURDEN FRAZEE pulled up and slouched in his saddle before Captain Quarles. His face was blank under the wiry whiskers as he said quietly, "The chief says he can't let the men go, Cap'n."

Captain Quarles' obstinate reddened face tightened. His voice was as solid and unbending as his body when he spoke.

"I told you this palaver was wasted, Frazee. You don't argue with animals like that. They understand only one thing, and that is a better man or superior arms."

His head jerked curtly right and left checking his file of cavalry. "We'll go down after them," he said.

He twisted in his McClellan saddle and snapped over his shoulder, "Sergeant! We'll move in on them now. Skirmish line. Trumpeter! At the first shot, and on command, you will blow Close Ranks and Charge. A clean sweep of the village, and if we don't find the men we want, take hostages. They can dicker for them later at the fort. For—'ar-rd, ho!"

The file surged over the crest of the ridge, and made a ragged line down the slope. Frazee twisted his pony aside and let them pass him, and he cursed silently into his sandy beard. An impotent anger filled him for there was nothing he could do. He knew Captain Quarles' reasoning.

Indians were stupid animals. Frazee,

who was a mountain man, and as much Indian as white, was almost as bad, though he was useful as a guide. Other than that, the captain's world did not include such people. The Army was his life, and Duty his god, and in just a few minutes hell was going to pop.

TWO BEARS WAS stripped to the waist. His high leggins were hooked to his belt, and his blanket was kilted about his waist. A streak of red paint ran across his cheek, over the high bridge of his nose, and across the other cheek. He wore a first-coup feather proudly erect at the back of his head.

He looked down now at the battered old Pomeroy flintlock musket for which he had perhaps six short charges of powder. His bare, veined, skinny old arms made the gun look tremendously heavy. His elkhorn bow was hung across his back, with a quiver of iron-tipped arrows, and his knife was in its sheath on his belt. He stooped to duck out of the lodge, and saw the solid line of the troopers coming down the slope to the ford. For an instant, his resolve almost wavered, and then his fingers touched the medicine bag hung on his chest, and he began a soft, almost inaudible chanting of his war song.

Yellow Ear and Bright Wolf stepped out of their own lodges at almost the same moment, both old men, nearly his own age, both comrades of the days that were gone.

"The Long Knives come," said Yellow Ear softly.

"Hai!" said Bright Wolf, "Now we die like men." His lips formed his own war song. Two Bears looked back through the camp, glad that the young men were all away, hunting. The horses were gone, drifted back into the timber. The boys should keep them moving now, and perhaps they could keep them away from the Long Knives. He breathed deeply and turned back.

The Long Knife troopers were crashing the ice of the ford under the hooves of their horses now. They towered against the wintry sky, solid and fat with good eating, dully gleaming with buttons and ready guns, the clatter and jingle and clinking of their spurs and sabers and saddle fittings coming over the solid trampling of hooves in the crusty snow. But their guns were silent, and they kept their horses in that steady, remorseless walk. Two Bears sighed, and as the first horse touched on the trampled trail to water, he eared back the heavy hammer of the Pomeroy and pulled the trigger.

The vise-jaw of the hammer slammed the flint forward, scraping on the pan lid, lifting it and throwing sparks. The musket bellowed, pointed straight up—a warning shot.

Swiftly, Two Bears lowered the butt to the ground, poured powder from his tipped powder horn, slapped another ball on a square of greased buckskin, rammed it home. He had to prime the pan with the same course powder he used in barrel. He had no priming powder. But even as he did these things with deft speed, he heard the bugle send its clear brass voice at them, and the troopers were suddenly crowding stirrup to stirrup, and the drumming of charging hooves made a dull thunder on the frozen earth.

The guns of the Long Knives were coming alive now, shattering the air of the camp with their harsh barking voices. The one who rode a pace ahead, the one with gold braid marking his shoulders, carried a short gun balanced in his right hand, and his reddened, square face twisted as he bellowed commands to his troopers. Two Bears brought the Pomeroy onto this man and pulled the trigger.

Sparks flared from the flint, but the coarse powder did not catch. Two Bears snatched the hammer back again, and now a trooper was riding at him, coming at him with his mouth gaping in a soundless yell, and Two Bears thrust the muzzle almost against the man's side and pulled off the shot. The Pomeroy bellowed, and almost leaped from his hands, and the man piled out of the other side of the saddle.

Two Bears automatically slapped the driving horse on the shoulder with the flat of his hand, claiming it for his own, and then another trooper came at him, and the trooper swung his saber high and brought it down.

Two Bears threw up the Pomeroy, holding it with both hands, and the blade clanged against it. But Two Bears' muscles would not take the violence of the blow. The barrel deflected the blow, but

the blade drove it down, and the driving steel caught him alongside the head, and Two Bears was suddenly falling into a great blackness that grew out of the snow and swallowed him up. The charging shoulder of the cavalry mount caught him and spun him away, and one iron-shod hoof caught his ribs as he fell, but he felt none of it.

CAPTAIN QUARLES sat squarely and stolidly in the saddle of his heaving mount, and took his sergeant's report.

"One dead, three wounded," said the sergeant. "Corporal Allen and Troopers Odlick and Franz captured four women, with packs on their backs, in the underbrush on the far side of the village. Three of the skulkers who fought among the tipi's, killed. The rest got out into the brush. Mostly half-grown boys, I'd say, sir. Otherwise, the village is now deserted, sir."

The captain returned the sergeant's salute, and said briskly, "Burn this mess of rags and hides. Half an hour for rations and checking equipment. Detail two men to guard the hostages. The rest of the troop ready to take the trail in thirty minutes. That's all, Sergeant."

Burden Frazee kneed his pony around to come alongside the captain. "Cap'n Quarles, you ain't figgerin' to burn their lodges, are you?"

The captain gave the guide an impatient flick of his icy eyes. "I am," he said shortly.

"But hang it all, man, it don't shine," Frazee blurted. "They can't make out the winter without lodges."

Captain Quarles retorted stiffly, "Frazee, rid your mind of the thought that this is a tea party. I am here to arrest four murderers. Their people fired upon the United States Army. May I remind you that no one fires upon the Army except its enemies. Therefore, this detail will be carried out to its conclusion. We shall follow them and attack them. Resistance will be put down with a firm hand, and we shall take in the murderers. Failing that, we shall take what hostages come to our hand. Anyone firing upon us will be considered a hostile, and dealt with as such. Is that clear?"

"Clear enough, Cap'n," said Frazee roughly. "A half-breed trader cheats a bunch of Injuns out of their horses, and gets his mark rubbed out when they get 'em back. So the Yewnited States Army wipes out a whole village of starvin' women and kids and old men just to show 'em who's boss. I reckon it's clear enough, Cap'n."

Quarles flushed a deeper red under his wind-burned cheeks, and snapped, "Sergeant, this man is under open arrest. When he scouts, detail a man to accompany him. I will take up his case when we return to the fort."

"What do you mean, arrest?" demanded Frazee truculently.

"Just what I said, Frazee." The captain's voice was icy. "If open arrest does not suit you, you will be disarmed and put under guard. Now, you will take up the trail, with an escort, five minutes before the troop. You will fire signal shots at any sign of resistance, and await the troop. The troop will move at route speed, so keep moving. I intend to wind this thing up by dark. That's all, Frazee."

For just a moment, a fire that should have warned the captain showed in Frazee's frosty blue eyes. Then his mouth quirked in a sardonic grimace, and he turned away without another word. He mounted and rode out, at the word, with a trooper a length behind, carrying a carbine unsheathed across the pommel of his McClellan saddle. Frazee cut a slant eye at the trooper, and grunted contemptuously. He got out a strip of jerky and chewed the tough stringy stuff as he followed the trail.

TWO BEARS CAME awake with the cold biting deep inside him. He moved his head, and an icy cake of frozen snow raked his cheek. For a moment, he could not move; his arms and legs seemed to have turned into clumsy sticks, but finally he managed to roll over and twist his legs enough to bend his knees. Then pain came, and brought him fully awake, and he knew where he was.

He lay where he had fallen, half-buried in a bank of crusted snow, and his nostrils were filled with the stink of burnt cloth and hides. He raised his head, and the camp was no more. Smouldering heaps

marked where the lodges had been, and one fire burned, where two of the blue-coated Long Knives guarded four of the women. The rest of the troopers were gone.

First, he searched for the gun, with the snow bank hiding him, but the gun was broken. The shearing blade that had struck him down had broken the brittle metal of the hammer, and the Pomeroy could not be fired. He left it, and crawled away, still keeping the ridge of trampled snow between him and the fire.

When he was far enough away, he stood up, and instantly fell again. Again he got up, with a dull, consuming pain tearing at his shoulder, water in his trembling legs, but he got up. He pulled his blanket up to cover his throbbing shoulder, and took up a staggering walk, plowing through the snow, moving back into the timber.

He crossed a small ridge, descended into the canyon beyond, finally spotted a trail where the boys had driven the horses. He sheered away from that and mounted the cross slope, keeping to the brush, but heading in the general direction of the horse trail. His feet were like blocks of wood. His leggins were soaked, from the time he had lain unconscious, and now they were frozen stiff, rasping at his legs where the action of his knees had broken the icing to make them bend.

Again he came across the horse trail, and moved away, and then he heard the muffled thudding of walking horses.

He dropped back into the shelter of the crowding brush, and carefully worked his elkhorn bow out from under the blanket . . . then found his numbed and stiffened muscles could not string it. He dropped down into the snow, with the branches of the bush behind him to break up the outline of his head.

It was Burden Frazee with a trooper behind him. The trooper was not watching the trail, but kept his eyes on Frazee's back. Two Bears had a sudden numb wonder at how he had gotten ahead of Frazee. Frazee must have left the campsite long before Two Bears came alive, but here he plodded on the trail, and Two Bears had gone by him.

He saw the eyes of his blood-brother flicking restlessly through the timber, watching everything with a quick intentness, and then Frazee's icy blue eyes came on Two Bears . . . as somehow he had known they would. He had come too close to the horse trail back there. Burden would never miss that. And now Burden Frazee had found him, and Two Bears did not have strength enough to string his bow.

Then Frazee's eyes went on but not before one blue eye had winked quickly. And Frazee was singing a little monotone song, in the Indian tongue of Two Bears. It was very soft, the sort of thing a man might croon absently to himself, but Two Bears caught the words: *My brother, the night is coming. The hunters go southward* . . .

Then the scout and the Long Knife trooper were gone; the wind began to rise a little, and snow began to fall. Within a minute, the trail was a dim thing seen through a thick curtain, and Two Bears started to rise.

Then he caught a clumping and jingling and thudding of hooves, and the troop came by, with the big man, the one with gold on his shoulders, sitting thick and heavy in the saddle, his broad, reddened face stubbornly straight ahead, ignoring even the icy pelting of the snow on his cheek. A flanker came by Two Bears, passing behind the very bush that sheltered him. But the trooper, from his seat in the saddle, saw nothing but the thick mushroom of snow that covered the bush, and rode on. The light was dulling, when Two Bears crawled out and staggered to his feet.

BY THE TIME he reached the rendezvous, his moccasins were falling apart. The sinew lacings were wet, and the seams were gaping open, and he knew dully that his feet were bleeding, but he kept moving. Then a shadow rose up out of the snow and said softly, "Grandfather?"

"Ai."

It was Little Knife, shivering with the cold, but with his bow strung, and an arrow on the string.

Two Bears asked, "The horses?"

Little Knife pointed with his chin. "Across the draw."

"And the young men?"

"They are here. With-Two-Tails killed a deer. They saw the camp, and wanted to fight the Long Knives, but Bright Wolf made them wait. Have you seen Yellow

Ear?"

Two Bears said stolidly, "Yellow Ear is dead. The Long Knives have captured four of the women." He turned away from his grandson and trudged on to the little fire, which did not show ten feet away, for the women had built a screen of boughs around it.

As he came out of the darkness of blowing snow, the rest of them pulled aside to give him room to hunker down by the fire. One of the women silently brought him a piece of meat, and another pulled the split moccasins from his feet and put on another pair from the pack of goods she had saved. They were too big, but that was all right. His feet swelled almost visibly as the warmth of the fire touched them. He moved back a little, and pulled a corner of his worn blanket to cover them from the heat. He wolfed the meat down quickly.

The young men drifted over from other tiny, hidden fires and when he was finished eating, one of them said almost harshly, "Uncle, we take the war-trail against the Long Knives at daylight."

"No," said Two Bears. "We will stay hidden from the Long Knives until they go away. We can have no more killing. It was the killing of the black trader that brought them here."

The young man, Eager Hunter, said quickly, "The black trader made us drunk and stole our horses. He is the one who fired the first shot. We took back our horses. We are not children, Uncle. We are men."

"There will be no more killing," repeated Two Bears. "We are too weak. If you are killed or captured, your families will die. And there are not many left. No, we will not fight."

Eager Hunter spun on his heel, and walked lithely away. Two Bears watched his strong young shoulders, proud and square under the deer-hide robe, and sighed. He knew. He remembered his own vaunting strength of youth. He remembered the time when the Crows and the Arapahoes frightened their children with the name of Two Bears. The griping of shamed anger was in him, for he knew it was better that a man die in battle, with his face turned to the enemy, than to die of hunger. But the old days were gone.

If the buffalo came back . . . If the Long Knives stayed to their forts and left the Indian in peace. . . He did not sleep well.

There was no meat left in the morning. A few scraps for the youngest of the children, a scant handful of hoarded pemmican for the young men. One of the women brought Two Bears a horn of soup, the liquid in which the meat had been boiled for the children. It was warm, and made a strengthening glow in his stomach, for all it was a mouthful.

The young men, six of them, ranging in years from 18 summers to 30, were catching up their ponies, making ready for the day's hunt. Two Bears walked out to them.

"Hunt into the hills," he said. "Do not shoot your guns. The Long Knives will hear. We will meet across Broken Leg Woman creek. We will make many trails for the Long Knives to follow. Perhaps they will go back." He wondered how long Burden Frazee could fool the leader of the Long Knives . . . then dismissed the thought. His brother Burden Frazee—Buffalo Man—must conduct himself as a man with the Long Knives. He could not expect too much help from him.

And even as he turned away from the young men, the shot cracked in the brush across from the camp. A sharp, barking shot, from a cavalry carbine. Two Bears broke into a shambling trot toward the sound, fighting the hampering depth of the snow.

CAPTAIN QUARLES hadn't put an end to it by night. Burden Frazee scouted conscientiously, following always the heaviest trail of the horse herd, it being obvious even to the red-necked recruit that escorted him that he could not follow the single trails that split off at intervals. And, as Burden knew it would, the horse trail suddenly fanned out as dusk approached, and when the troop caught up to them there were twelve different trails, fanning out in as many directions. Captain Quarles, tight-lipped, surveyed it in silence, then ordered night camp made.

He called Burden over to his fire after dark and demanded gruffly, "Any idea where they are, Frazee?"

Frazee put his two thumbs together and put both hands out before him with the fingers spread like spokes of a wheel. "Sure," he said drily. "They went thata-

way. Take your pick."

The captain stared at him hotly for a long moment. "You'll have something to answer to when we end this," he said, then dismissed the scout abruptly.

The troopers moved stiffly and slowly for reveille. They were numbed and sullen from the cold, and their fingers made hard work of working their stiff leather in saddling. Some of them hadn't slept at all, and even with night-long tending, some of them had trouble keeping a fire.

Frazee, who had spent a quite comfortable night with one small bull robe and a blanket, and no fire at all, cut a sardonic eye at their slow fumbling efforts and grinned faintly under his grizzled beard.

Captain Quarles was sharp with the sergeant, who blistered the troopers, but even so, it was a drooping troop that finally lined out, and Frazee knew that this troop, outfitted as they were with the best of heavy winter woolens, had put in a harder night than the ragged, ill-fed Indians with Two Bears. Somehow, that gave him satisfaction.

Frazee rode ahead, cutting a wide sweeping circle, taking the lashing of the snow-laden wind with fatalistic patience, almost enjoying the obvious misery of his escort, who, though he was outfitted much better and was at least twenty years younger than the scout, was obviously suffering from the vicious weather.

His first circle netted him nothing. The trails showed no signs of gathering again. He looked back once, and saw that Quarles was putting outriders out on the flank, and then Frazee took another wide swing out through the brush, and the wind really opened up, and cut visibility down to mere feet. The trails were disappearing under the shifting snow. Then, far off to the side, he heard the flat, businesslike crack of an Army carbine, and a second later, the deep bellowing answer of a smoothbore musket, loaded with coarse trade powder and an ill fitting ball. He kicked his mount around and rode at the sound, with his escort floundering in his wake. With a dismal certainty, he knew that Captain Quarles had blundered into contact with the Indians.

TWO BEARS RAN, hampered by the snow, and then one of the young men, Eager Hunter, came by him on a plunging pony, his belted blanket billowing behind, and even as Eager Hunter was hidden by the swirling wind-borne snow, his ancient musket bellowed out at the unseen Long Knife.

Two Bears plunged on, pausing only to string his sinew-backed elkhorn bow. and then suddenly his grandson Little Knife was beside him, riding one horse and leading another.

"Here, Grandfather," cried Little Knife, tossing the lead rope to Two Bears, and he too was swallowed up in the snow.

Two Bears swung up, saw the other young men come driving up, their ponies taking the snow in plunging leaps, and then he put his own mount at the firing ahead. He passed the women, scrambling with their packs, and yelled at them to fall back to where the ponies had been held, and heard the firing pick up. He unconsciously started his war song, heard Bright Wolf's shrill gobbling yell ahead, and rode into battle—and felt years sliding off his back as he rode.

The Long Knives were in a clumsy tangle, the bundled-up troopers fighting their mounts, swinging their heads wildly, as the young men drove out of the snow curtain to fire and to dodge again into invisibility. Bright Wolf loomed up alongside Two Bears, and his cracked voice screamed, "With me, young men, with me!" And he leaned over his pony's neck and started a headlong charge straight into the troopers.

Two Bears clamped his teeth on the single thong that directed his mount, fitted an arrow to the bow string, and rode with Bright Wolf, shoulder to shoulder. A trooper loomed out of the shifting haze, high and square in the saddle, his mouth gaping as he yelled, and Two Bears loosed his shaft, saw it straighten him up, saw the trooper reel half out of the saddle, and then he saw the big man, the one with the markings on his shoulders.

He was yelling commands, in a great roaring voice, a short gun balanced in his right hand, and troopers were gathering on him, a hard, compact knot, a tough nut to crack if they got set, and Two Bears altered his course to ride straight at them. He rode between two troopers, felt his pony lurch as it struck shoulders with one

of the big bay cavalry mounts, and then the big leader loomed up before him, and Two Bears felt the scorch of exploded gunpowder on his face, and he swung the bow to count coup, striking with the bow as if it were a stick; not to kill the man, but to count a first coup. To strike an enemy in battle, without wounding or killing him, was a greater honor than a man could gain in any other way.

The bow struck the man across the face, with the wiry strength of Two Bears' arm behind it, and he saw the man spill out of the saddle, caught a quick frozen glimpse of the man's gaping mouth, his nose queerly askew where the elkhorn bow had struck; but he saw no fear in the man. Amazement, yes, and anger, and a bulldog determination, but no fear; and Two Bears knew he had found an enemy worthy of the battle. Then his pony had carried him through and past the knot of troopers, and the blanket of snow was swinging to hide him.

The young men and Bright Wolf were looming up around him, their faces set, eyes glittering with the heat of battle, the ponies breathing hard, with little spurting clouds of moisture springing from their nostrils, and Two Bears yelled again, whirled his pony and led them back into the milling throng of troopers.

The big leader was swinging back into the saddle, and the troopers were pulled into a semblance of line now, and their carbines made a sudden unanimous roaring. Bright Wolf pitched off at Two Bears' elbow, and his place was taken by Little Knife, who rode clinging low to his pony's neck, his shrill young piping sounding above the deadly voices of the trooper's guns. He straightened up suddenly, whipped an arrow back to the limit of the bow, and turned it loose. A trooper surged up high in his saddle and toppled over, the arrow thrust out stiffly from his chest. Then the carbines roared in unison again, and a somersaulting pony tumbled against Two Bears' mount, drove it staggering to the side and the charge was suddenly broken. Two Bears swung wide and into the sheltering curtain of snow with the ragged remnants of his little band.

They split up then, every man for himself, darting out into visibility long enough to fire a shot or an arrow, wheeling back, out of sight. They had to make a longer run of it soon, for the troopers were falling back, not in retreat, but withdrawing slowly, keeping up a shattering fire, making them pay for every shot. Two Bears made one sally, felt the numbing shock of lead hitting him, the ripping tear of the slug as it tore a finger-wide furrow across his back as he turned, and when they gathered again, not a man of them was without his mark.

His anxious eyes saw Little Knife, his grandson, with a double wound in his upper arm, where a bullet had gone completely through. It was not bleeding much. The blood froze almost as soon as it welled out. Then he caught sight of his blood brother, Burden Frazee.

The scout came plunging out of the snow veil to join the troopers as Two Bears made another drive at them. He saw Buffalo Man riding short-stirruped like an Indian, his buckskins covered with a blanket that had a hole cut in the center so that his head came through it, and the ends belted to his waist like a poncho, and he saw him swing up his long deadly rifle.

With essential Indian fatalism, Two Bears knew that it was his time. Frazee was his brother—but he was a white man. He was a warrior with the Long Knives—and a man must fight with his own people. And as the black mouth of the gun came on him, Two Bears had a suddenly tired thought, "It is a brave one that kills me for he is my brother."

He straightened himself in that instant, to face death as bravely as it was sent, and then the gaping mouth of the rifle swept by him, even as it spat its long tongue of flame, and the pony suddenly went down under him, and somersaulted, and threw him so hard that even the cushioning snow did not save him. A great fiery pinwheel spun before his eyes, and then was blotted out.

He came awake as someone lifted his head, and for an instant he almost groaned at the knife-like stab of pain as the movement pulled the frozen wound open on his back. Then he struggled up to a sitting position. Little Knife was standing before him with the lead rope of his pony in one hand, the other arm dangling stiffly

from the double wound.

"My Grandfather," said Little Knife, "the Long Knives are going away." Two Bears shook his head. It felt thick and heavy.

"What did you say, my son?"

Little Knife's young face was smiling. "They go, Grandfather! The young men are following, but they are going back on their own trail. We beat them, Grandfather!"

Two Bears staggered to his feet. He slowly tramped through the beaten snow to the trampled area of the fight. The wind had stopped, and the heavy feathery flakes drifted down silently. His pony lay yonder, with a little steam rising as the snow struck its still warm hide. Yonder lay Bright Wolf, already filmed over with the white veil. Eager Hunter lay a few feet away, half under his dead pony, neither of them ever to move again. Another of the young men sat braced against a sapling, methodically and stoically binding a bandage of moss and buckskin about a gashed thigh. Another dead pony lay back-to-back with a big cavalry horse on the far side of the trampled spot.

Two Bears took a long breath, and let it out.

"Yes, my grandson," he said quietly and bitterly, "we have beaten them—for now."

But he knew how little they had won. They would have to move—all of them. The women, and the young ones; the wounded and the sick and the hungry. The snow was piling up, but they would have to go higher; through the pass, across the mountains, on into the dubious shelter of the high valleys beyond. Perhaps they would find game, perhaps not. Only the Spirit above could say.

But the Long Knives would be back—they always came back. Perhaps not this winter; perhaps not next summer—but they would be back. He sighed, and the age came on him again.

"Yes, my grandson," he said, "we have beaten them for now."

FAR DOWN HIS own back-trail, Captain Quarles re-formed his troop. Burden Frazee came in out of the hampering snow and reported, "They've give it up, Cap'n. I don't think they'll tackle us again."

Captain Quarles' smoldering anger roared out of him.

"A dirty, stinking bunch of savages!" he roared. "A miserable, stinking bunch of half-starved animals drove us back!" His eyes glinted savagely from their blackened and swollen sockets, past the flattened bridge of his smashed nose. He touched it, and the broken bones gritted, and he swore violently. His eyes glared a baleful promise at the sergeant. "This troop will be more than a bunch of left-handed clowns when they take the field again, Sergeant," he said. Then he wheeled on Frazee.

"And as for you . . . " he began.

Frazee kneed his pony around to face the captain. He grinned as a wolf grins and his eyes came hard and icy blue on Quarles. Somehow, in the movement, his gun muzzle came to bear on the captain's belt buckle.

"What about me, Cap'n?"

Quarles mouth opened to roar an order to his sergeant and then something in those icy eyes closed his lips without a sound.

"That's fine," said Frazee, still so softly that the captain alone caught his words. "Let me make my talk, and then you kin yell iff'n you want.

"Now let's size this thing up and see how the stick floats. Yer tail's in a sling, Cap'n. You got wounded men, and sick men, and you're about out of supplies. You got damn nigh two week's hard marchin' to git back to the fort. If I ride a hundred feet out'n this camp, your whole damn army'll never ketch me in your natcherl lives. An' I'm not sure you kin even find your way back to the fort."

Quarles started as if to wheel away, but a twitch of the gun muzzle halted him, glowering.

"Open your ears, Cap'n, let a little of this soak in. Two Bears had you whipped. You know why? Cause he ain't fightin' for no uniform, and no book of rules, he's fightin' for his life, and his people's life. Iff'n I hadn't shot his horse out from under him, there'd have been a lot of blue-coats to bury back there. He's off your back, for now, Cap'n, and he'll stay off, unless he's jumped again. I done you a good turn, this day, and I don't aim to take no dirt off'n your stick about it.

"Now, I'm layin' it right in your hands,

Cap'n. Iff'n you want to take your lickin', and go home, I'll stick with you, and git you through. But iff'n you don't, I'm ridin' out of here, and to hell with you. Take your pick."

Captain Quarles eyes blazed for a moment, and his hand went unconsciously to his broken nose, then fell away. His eyes bored into Frazee's, and he studied the mountain man for a long minute. He read the brutal truth in the man's eyes.

"You think I'm a fool, don't you?"

The guide's mouth quirked slightly. "Not beyond savin', Cap'n," he said quietly. You're green. You're too full of the Army. But you ain't no coward, and you ain't a fool, really. When you learn somethin' besides regulations and squads right and left, you'll be plenty man. But you're still workin' with the idee that them Cheyennes ain't men. Git that out of your head, and let it soak in that they've got feelin's and pride like a natcherl man, and you'll do. Old Two Bears seen it in you. He never would have struck coup on a coward. He'd have killed you, first shot, and hung your scalp out for the jaybirds.

"You do your job, and that means takin' your lickin' now, and next time, maybe you'll come out top dog. Two Bears wouldn't hold it agin you. But he'll fight—he'll always fight, and the only way you'll ever take him is dead. So what's your play?"

Captain Quarles looked up at Frazee, and his blotched face showed no more emotion than a wooden mask. Then he said suddenly, "You're right, of course. I can't carry on a campaign under these conditions. I rescind all arrest orders against you. I will return to the fort and refit for another expedition. I should like to have you as my guide."

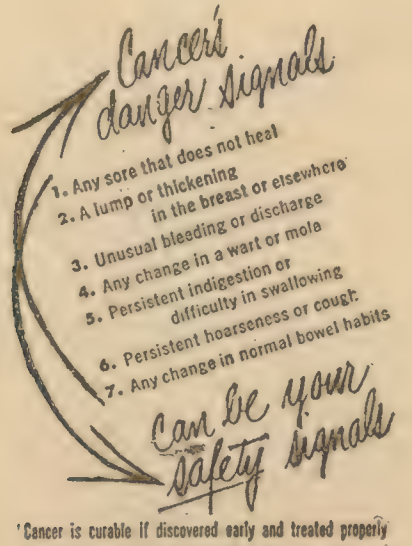
For an instant, Burden Frazee's craggy features split in a genuine smile. Then he shook his head.

"No, Cap'n," he said slowly, "I can't see my way to do it. Me and Two Bears—well, you'd better git another guide. I'll point out a good man for you. I'll take you back to the fort, and then I'm goin' to quit. Reckon that's the way my stick floats."

Quarles nodded stiffly.

Frazee turned his pony and rode back along the trail they had trampled in their retreat. He pulled up short of the battleground, pulled down a limb, and stuck it across the trail. From around his neck, he took his pipe, and hung it on the branch by its thong.

The young men would be scouting here, he knew, and they'd take this pipe to Two Bears. Two Bears would understand, he knew. He kicked his pony around and rode back to the troopers' camp.


Cancer's danger signals
1. Any sore that does not heal
2. A lump or thickening in the breast or elsewhere
3. Unusual bleeding or discharge
4. Any change in a wart or mole
5. Persistent indigestion or difficulty in swallowing
6. Persistent hoarseness or cough
7. Any change in normal bowel habits
can be your safety signals
'Cancer is curable if discovered early and treated properly
AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY, INC.

DEATH TO THE WHITE SIOUX!

By ANSON SLAUGHTER

He was a Dog Soldier; a young brave with a great future among the dauntless Sioux . . . 'til foolishly, he let the blinding shadow of the wagon train white girl cool his warrior blood.

THE DOG SOLDIERS had a brush with the blue-coats in the moon of New Grass. One Bull got a bullet through his shoulder at something over a hundred yards, which was a sign from his medicine; for even a blue-coat had no business shooting with that kind of accuracy with a short gun at that range.

So One Bull dropped the fight and went home, hanging tight to his pony's mane as the sickness came after the shock, and the rest of the Dog Soldiers took one more pass at the blue-coats. Bent Leg got his pony shot out from under him, and they all gave it up and went away without so much as a stolen horse or a bit of cloth to show for their skirmish. It was a sign of things to come.

Coyote didn't get in on that skirmish. He was out hunting, and he got a fat buffalo cow whose hind quarters were all creamy white, and the rest of her a light tan color. His father, Many Coups, took the hide to the medicine man, old Wolf-With-Two-Tails, who pronounced the cow undeniably a sacred animal. So the hide was dressed and tanned and put up with the head on a pole painted and striped with the spirit colors, and Coyote, after his prayers and fastings, was declared a man, and initiated into the Dog Soldier Society. A week later he saw the wagons of the white man for the first time.

Coyote rode with the Dog Soldiers, this time. They had known of the coming of the wagon train for two days, for the Dog Soldier Society was in charge of scouting and hunting this moon, while the Elk Soldiers were in charge of the camp.

The train was an enormous thing to Coyote's eyes; nearly a half a mile of wagons, all in line for some foolish reason, so that the wagons from the lead one back ate the other's dust. Behind, and a little to one side, came the riders, with a herd of something that looked a little like buffalo, but were not. Their eyes gleamed just a little, for it was a fine herd of horses.

The Dog Soldiers pulled up on the crest of a little rise, letting the white men of the train see them, and then they dropped down the barely perceptible slope, kicking their ponies into a run.

A GREAT activity broke out below. A bellowing of voices arose, and the rearward wagons broke into a scuttling flurry of speed, closing the gaps with the ones ahead, while the lead wagon was suddenly wheeling back in a looping circle, while the others swung to complete the curve. The riders were bunching the herd of horses, moving them up to funnel into the circle made by the wagons, and then a knot of riders broke away from the turmoil and came out to meet the Dog Soldiers.

They thought at first that the man in the lead might be one of them, for he rode like an Indian, and his buckskins stood out against the colors of the others' clothing. Then when they got closer, Many Coups gave a great shout of greeting. Then the rest of them recognized him. It was Two Shooter—or, as the white men called him, Lije Bangor.

His famous gun that had given him his name, a revolving-barrel rifle, was slanted across his thighs, while his other hand held out his pipe in a peaceful greeting, and he grinned at them in a way they remembered from the rendezvous of the mountain men at the Green River.

Many Coups said, "Huh!" and held out his hand white man style, and they shook hands. Then Many Coups asked in Sioux, "Where do all these Long Knives go, Two

Shooter?"

"To the Ourigan, Many Coups."

Many Coups wrinkled his brow in puzzlement.

"Past the lands of the Nez Perce and the Flatheads," explained Two Shooter. Then one of the other white men interrupted, "What they after, Lige?"

"Nuthin'. Just lookin' us over. Hunkpapa Sioux. Friends of mine. Looks like now might be a good time to give 'em some of that tobacco I told you to bring along." Then he switched back to Sioux. "Come to the wagons," he said, "and the Long Knives will give presents."

It seemed to Coyote that every gap between the wagons was filled with faces. Faces and guns. There were men and women and children, and it seemed that every one of them had some kind of a gun in his hands. The faces were stiff, even though they showed excitement, and it came to Coyote that these people were frightened. He wondered at that.

They dismounted, carrying themselves with a stiff dignity under the eyes of the men and women of the train, and Coyote was suddenly glad that he wore his best finery: the white buckskin shirt, beautifully quilted and beaded and shyly given to him by Antelope Woman, who was the daughter of Long Runner. He carried the flintlock musket his father had given him, with the barrel sawed off to make it a good buffalo gun, and he wore his best beaded moccasins and antelope leggins.

Then he saw the girl, a slender, high-breasted girl, about his own age, he guessed, perhaps seventeen or eighteen summers, and he found himself staring. Her face was slender too, coming down to a delicate pointed chin, and her eyes were the blue of bell-flowers and her lips curved and red.

She saw him too, and as his eyes stayed on her in his unconscious stare, her cheeks flushed under their delicate tan, and her hand went to her hair in the age-old gesture of uncertain woman. She gave him what he was sure was the beginnings of an uncertain smile, and then turned abruptly away. Then a voice said suddenly and roughly, in tones of baffled surprise, "Damn my eyes if that ain't a white Injun!"

With a sudden start of surprise, Coyote saw that the man was thrusting a rigid arm and pointing finger at him; but that was not the cause of all the surprise—for somehow, from somewhere deep inside him, Coyote was dredging up knowledge of the white man's words. Some of the words were just sounds but he understood what the man said!

Of course, it seemed that he had always known a little Boston talk, though most of the mountain men, like Two Shooter used Sioux, helped out with the universal sign talk. But now, as center of attention, he felt suddenly embarrassed, and turned away from the man.

But he would not be put off. He followed Coyote, peered closely into his face.

"'Y gorry," he said, "they's no denyin' it. Lookit that! Blue eyes, and the hair's more brown than black. How 'bout that?"

Two Shooter had a small keg of tobacco twists in the crook of his arm, passing them out to the Dog Soldiers, and he said easily, "Shore, reckon he is. But he won't know what you're talkin' about. He's been Sioux since he was a sucklin' pup. The head man here," nodding at Many Coups, "is his father. Leave him alone."

"But hang it all, iff'n he's a white man, he's got no call livin' with these varmints!"

"Fergit it," said the guide shortly.

But the seed had been planted, and the curious wagoners were gathering around Coyote, who felt troubled and uncertain under their closely prying eyes. He turned away from them, and saw that the girl was watching him again. He could not be sure that she had heard the Boston words, but it was a certainty that she smiled on him now.

THEN ANOTHER man pushed his way through to peer closely at Coyote. He was a thin man, with a sad face deeply lined, and with a resonant bass voice.

"Brethern," he said, in that deep rolling voice, "this should be investigated. To think that one of us is being brought up as a heathen, worshipping idolatrous gods, how long shall his lost soul clamor at the gates of Grace. . . "

"Now, look, Revrund," interrupted the buckskinned guide. A worried crease showed between his brows. "Look, Rev-

rund. This lad's Sioux. White or black or green or pink, he's Sioux. And these people, call 'em heathens if you like, ain't called the Cut Throats in sign talk for nothin'. They're good people if you know 'em, and they'll give you the shirt off their backs and the meat out of their mouths if you are a friend of theirs. But they're proud, and they're touchy and take my word for it, now is no time to go stirrin' 'em up. They's a camp of a hundred lodges not ten miles from here, and I don't aim for 'em to get no idees about a ha'r-raisin' party. These horses we got are an almighty temptation to 'em as it is. If you want to worry about immortal souls, pray a little for the wimmin and kids in this train."

"Bosh!" said the Reverend. "We are all children of God. . . "

"You bet," retorted the guide grimly. "And these chillun right here is the darndest fightin' chillun you'll see from one ocean to the other, if'n you'll 'scuse the words. . . " And right on the heels of that came a yell and a shot, a bellowing, shocking sound that brought the guide around sharply.

One of the Dog Soldiers was down, making no sound after the first yell, clutching at his thigh, with the rich red blood welling out between his fingers. A bearded wagoner stood, still pointing his empty gun vaguely at the Dog Soldier, and the guide took three long running strides and spun the man roughly around by his shoulder.

"What in tunket you pullin?" he demanded.

"He—he grabbed my gun," the wagoner shouted hoarsely. "I grabbed it back an' hit him with the flat o' my hand, and he went for a knife. I had to. . . "

"Oh, you tarnation idjut!" roared the guide. He wheeled back on the Indians, who were breaking free of the crowd. Many Coups and Bent Leg were already swinging onto their ponies, wrenching them around in a tight swing to bring them between the wagoners and the crippled warrior.

Bent Leg snatched the trailing bridle thong of the crippled man's pony, and Coyote ran across, caught the man up, boosted him to the pony's back, and swung the flintlock to cover the wagoners as he backed toward his own mount. Others were mounted now, clustering around Many Coups, while Bent Leg led the pony with the wounded man, taking him out at a run, the wounded one clinging desperately to the mane of the pony.

THEN COYOTE was mounted, and Many Coups put his pony at the wagoners, scattered them with the driving shoulders and hooves of the animal, and the Dog Soldiers scattered out, in a chorus of shrill yelling, flogging their ponies, breaking for the crest of the rise, riding low along their animal's backs. Strangely, there were no shots behind them.

They pulled up on the crest, out of rifle range, and then Many Coups said sharply, "Young men, come with me."

But Bent Leg and the other young warriors were enraged at having run from the wagoners. Bent Leg tossed the lead thong of the wounded man's pony to Many Coups and cried hotly, "Those white men are too fat with pride! I'll punch a few holes in them to see if it is really fat, or just wind!"

He wheeled back down the slope, with the others at his back, screeching a high, wavering yell, swinging his heavy musket over his head, his black braids whipping his shoulder blades as they rose and fell to his pony's frenzied gallop. Coyote started with him but Many Coups' sharp order brought him back.

Bent Leg and the warriors closed in rapidly on the circled wagons, and dust rose inside the circle as the wagoners ran toward the side he was approaching. Then even above the pounding of hooves and the taunting yells of the warriors, the guide's voice rose high and clear.

He was yelling at the wagoners to hold their fire. Bent Leg took his little band in almost to the wagons, and then suddenly wheeled, running parallel to the curve. The remaining horse herder was caught unaware.

One man still rode behind perhaps a dozen horses, a hundred yards from the gap in the rear of the train.

Coyote and Many Coups saw Bent Leg's arm rise and fall as he struck coup on the rider with his pony whip, not trying to kill the man, but to strike a blow that entitled him to wear an upright coup feather.

The herder reeled back in the saddle, not really hurt, but scared and confused, and another warrior snatched the unfired rifle from his hands and knocked him out of the saddle with a jab of the rifle butt in his ribs, and then they cut out the horses and fled, with the bullets of the aroused wagoners kicking up the dust about them. But the warriors had the horses, including the one the herder had been riding, for it ran with the rest, stirrups lashing its ribs, reins still hooked on the saddle horn.

Many Coups said sharply, "Come, son."

And Coyote dutifully took the lead rope of the wounded Dog Soldier's pony, and followed Many Coups back to the camp.

The wounded warrior, Dog Tail Man, was dead when they unlashed him from the pony and lowered him before his own lodge. The bullet that shattered his thigh bone had either cut the great artery in his thigh, or the jagged edges of bone had done it later. But he was dead, and the exultant faces of the pony-rich Dog Soldiers slowly stiffened when they brought their spoils into the camp and heard the wailing of Dog Tail Man's women.

Coyote rode silently behind his father to their lodge. Many Coups slid down, tossed the lead rope to Coyote, and he led his father's horse and rode his own out to where the young boys held the herd. He watered both the animals in the little creek that crossed the flat, and turned the animals loose.

ANTELOPE WOMAN came out of her father's lodge as he walked back into the camp, and smiled shyly at him. She was a pretty girl, of seventeen summers, slender, and with the dark liquid eyes of a doe. Her father and Many Coups had already spoken of their union, and the dowry of ponies had already been decided.

Only one thing had delayed their marriage this far. Antelope Woman's father, a crusty old warrior, was a warbonnet man. He had taken many scalps and stolen many horses, and it was his rule that his daughter must marry a man who had counted a first-coup. He had had no sons, and pride would not let his daughter wed with a man who could not wear the single upright feather that came with striking an armed enemy in battle. So they must wait; for while Coyote had become a man and a Dog Soldier, he had not yet killed his man nor stolen his horse, to make himself properly a man among men.

But today Antelope Woman's smile did not warm Coyote. Between his eyes and the girl rose the shadow of the white girl at the wagons, and her delicate flower face overshadowed the soft liquid eyes of Antelope Woman.

Coyote's mind was uneasy. He had caught enough of the Boston talk to understand, partly, but comprehension was coming slowly.

A white man, they had called him. He had never thought of it. His eyes were different, he knew; blue instead of brown or almost black. And his hair, rather than being straight and coarse and black, was a dark brown, and curled when he released it from the long braids he wore almost to his waist.

So his eyes did not truly see Antelope Woman, and went by her, and he turned his head away. Thus he did not see her soft smile waver, or the sudden trembling of her lips as she ducked back into her father's lodge.

His mother, Bear Woman, had meat for him as he came back to the lodge, and he and his father ate silently. When they were finished, and his father had shaved tobacco with red willow bark for a smoke, he asked almost shyly, "My father, why did the white man call me white?"

Many Coups' face was the face of a brooding eagle. No softness, no weakness, marred the classic planes of his strong features. And it was the fierce, undemonstrative affection of an eagle that he gave his son.

So he said now, shortly and almost fiercely, "You are my son. The wagon men lie." Then, without even finishing his pipe, he got up and stalked from the lodge.

Nor would his mother meet his eyes. She worked with her bone needle and sinew thread on a pair of moccasins, and kept her head bent to her work.

THERE WOULD be a dance that night, Coyote knew, so he did not change from his finery. He opened his beaded war bag, where his good clothing was normally kept, and got out his little mirror of polished steel and his paint.

His paint had been decided when he became a man and a Dog Soldier. A single streak of red, that ran across his cheeks and the high bridge of his nose to make an inverted 'V', and two spots of yellow on his forehead, such as marked the brows of Old-Man-Coyote, the Cunning One, himself. For he had seen Old-Man-Coyote in his medicine dream, during his ordeal of fasting and prayer, and the medicine man, Wolf-With-Two-Tails, had interrupted the dream.

He was forbidden to kill the grandsons of Old-Man-Coyote, the tawny little prairie wolves that hung at the fringes of the buffalo herds, for that was part of the medicine. His cunning would be the cunning of the coyote, and the ability to travel in silence, and to speak with many voices from one throat.

But Coyote was staring accusingly into his own blue eyes in the mirror, and his thoughts were confused.

The young Dog Soldiers danced coup that night, and Bent Leg danced the main dance. He leaped and crouched and whirled before the fire, acting out the giving of presents by Two Shooter, then the killing of Dog Tail Man, and the charge of Bent Leg and the Dog Soldiers, the striking coup on the horse herder, the stealing of the horses. The Dog Soldiers who had ridden with him leaped into the circle of firelight, and the one who had struck second coup enacted his triumph, and the others told which horses they claimed.

The drums snarled and clamored, and Bent Leg threw himself into the frenzied leapings of his war dance. He crouched and leaped, and shook his lance, and with a forked stick drew two lines in the dust, representing the double track of the wagons. He charged at the marks, again and again, and then he shuffled his feet through the tracks, showing how he would wipe out the mark of the white wagoners.

One by one, the other young Dog Soldiers flung themselves into the war dance. A half-dozen of the Elk Soldiers joined them. While the moon rolled its slow trail across the sky, the dancers leaped and shouted, and one unanimous chant rang up, soaring above the leaping flames of the fire: "Kill the white wagon men! Kill them to the last one!" And as the frenzy mounted, only one word came clearly from the now packed circle of dancers.

"Kill! Kill! Kill . . ."

But Coyote was not there. The war dance at first inflamed him. Here was his time for battle—a chance for capturing horses, and counting coups. . . and then the delicate flower face of the girl came before him, and his enthusiasm was suddenly dampened.

Almost without any volition of his own, he found himself moving down to the horses, catching up his own horse, a chunky little sorrel that his father had given him. He passed Antelope Woman, who drew out of the circle of women around the fire, and she asked softly, "Where do you go, Coyote?"

Startled, he whirled to see her dim shape behind him in the darkness, and he retorted almost roughly, "I ride for my own affairs, woman." Then he mounted and rode out, and gradually the sound of the dance faded out behind him.

The moon set early, but even in the faint light of the stars, he had no trouble picking up the trail of the wagons. The thought kept gnawing at him, I might capture the girl, and she would be mine. But if Elk Man or Bent Leg or any of the others got her first, they would not let me have her. They would keep her or sell her . . .

Out in the dark, a coyote yipped, and he listened. Then he tipped his head back and replied, and the little animal answered. Coyote grinned to himself. If he could fool them, his medicine was strong.

He dismounted at the first sign of the wagons' fireglow against the sky, and hobbled his horse. He left the short flint-lock musket as being too heavy and too slow to reload, and moved in on the camp afoot, with only a half-formed idea of what he wanted in his mind.

HE STOPPED at intervals, dropped flat on the ground, and searched the lighter cast of the horizon to sky-light possible scouts. But even so, it was his ears that warned him first, with the sound of stiff boot-soles scuffing on the sod. He sank down, and caught the dark loom of the sentry's body against the faint shine of the stars, and worked past the man easily. Again he waited, a hundred yards

further, while another patrolling watcher walked by within twenty feet of him, close enough to catch the pungent odor of tobacco from the man's covered pipe, but from there on in, it was child's play to gain the circled wagons.

Fires burned within the circle, and dark bodies passed back and forth, outlined by the flames. The camp was alert.

He prowled along the outer sides of the wagons, hearing the stirring of restless sleepers inside, then sank suddenly and noiselessly to the ground as another figure loomed up, coming directly toward him from a little distance outside the circle. He recognized her as she stepped up on the chained tongue of the wagon to clamber inside.

It was the girl, wearing a dark cloak over a thin white garment that showed the firm roundness of her body as she came between him and the firelight.

He acted instinctively. One arm went around her waist, brought her to him, as the other hand went across her mouth to stop the frightened sound that welled up in her throat.

She fought against him, with the wiry strength of a young animal, and for a moment, almost wriggled out of his grasp. He searched through the rusty doors of memory, finally found the words, "No 'fraid. No 'fraid me. No hurt you. You listen."

But still she fought until he had to throw her gently to the ground and put his weight on her to hold her. But he was the stronger, and little by little, the fight went out of her, and his constantly repeated words seemed to sink through her fright.

As her struggles ceased, he let her up, still holding her, and covering her mouth, and turned so that the light came from behind her, and lighted his face over her shoulder. He saw a light of recognition come in her eyes, and he said swiftly, "You no 'fraid. Be quiet. You quiet, I turn you loose?" He made a question of the words, and she nodded, a stiff little movement.

He let her go reluctantly, the clean flower smell of her in his nostrils, and he whispered, "What name, you?"

She rubbed a hand across her lips, and stared at him. He had to repeat the question before she answered.

"Margaret," she said.

He puzzled the name out in his mind. "Mah-get. Mah-get."

He said bluntly, because he did not know how else to say it, "You be my woman?"

He could see she was puzzled, and then apparently, the words frightened her. She shrank back against the wagon wheel with a startled gasp.

"No," she said. "No!"

"Huh. You got 'nother man?"

"No, of course not!" She was carefully moving her feet, bracing herself, ready to fling herself over the wagon tongue into the inner circle of the wagons. His hand shot out just in time to cut off a shout. Again she wrestled briefly against his superior strength.

"No, 'fraid," he said again. "No 'fraid. Just talk." Then as she relaxed again, he released her and said, "You find Two Shooter. Tell him, come here. But quiet, or maybe. . ." He made a gesture to encompass the whole circled train, and made a gesture across his throat that was plainer than words.

The girl gasped, moved back, without taking her eyes from his face, moving uncertainly until she felt the wagon tongue against the backs of her legs, then suddenly she whirled, and was gone out of sight around the wagon.

COYOTE sank back into invisibility on the ground, and waited. He heard no sound, despite his keen watch, until suddenly Two Shooter's voice came whispering from the darkness by the wagon, "How, kola."

A little warmth of admiration came to Coyote's breast. Here was a true man, to walk up to him while he watched, with no sound to tell of his coming.

"It is Coyote," he whispered back, and stood up.

"Huh," said the scout, "Many Coups' son." He drifted out into the faint starlight, straight and tall in his buckskins, his famous double-barrelled rifle hung in the crook of his arm.

"Why are you here?" asked Two Shooter in Sioux.

"I came to talk to the woman, but she is frightened." He could see Mah-get behind Two Shooter, a dim shape poised for

flight, and he blurted out, "I came to take her for my woman before the worriors come."

"Your people make war, then," said Two Shooter matter-of-factly.

"The young men are angry," said Coyote. "Dog Tail Man died. His women wail in his lodge for revenge, for Dog Tail Man died with empty hands."

"Huh!" said the scout again, the Indian grunt expressing everything and nothing. Then one hand rubbed his bristling chin, making a faint dry noise.

"Tell my friend, your father," said Two Shooter slowly, "that the white wagon men have many guns that shoot far. But they want peace and will leave presents. But if the young men make war on the wagon white men there will be many death songs sung in the lodges of my friends the Sioux. In a few days the wagons will be past the land of the Sioux, anyway, and there will be no need for war. Tell him . . ."

Then a shadow stepped out of the blot the wagon made, and a cold gun muzzle was jammed into Coyote's side.

"Atta man, Lije," said the man. "Now we got him cold to rights." The gun muzzle nudged Coyote roughly, stopping his instinctive movement.

"Here, now!" said Two Shooter in a protesting voice, "you leave this lad be!"

"Like hell," said the man. Coyote knew him now, the bearded one who had shot Dog Tail Man. "What's he sneakin' around here fur, anyhow?"

"He ain't harmin' anybody," said Two Shooter. "He come to talk to me."

The bearded man laughed harshly. "Well, that's a good 'un. Cause now I got him, and he's my lever. I aim to git them horses of mine back with him."

Two Shooter's voice dropped to a dangerous murmur. "Halfhill," he said softly, "you're captain of this train, but 'y gorry, I'm the guide. It was voted on that I did the dealin' with Injuns, and you handled the train. Let's leave it that way, huh?"

Halfhill's teeth showed white in the parting of his beard. It was not a pleasant smile. "Lije," he said roughly, "I bought them horses in Ohio, and paid big money for 'em. They'll double their price in Oregon. I captured this varmint, and I'm gonna hold him till I trade him back for

DO YOU WANT TO STOP TOBACCO?
Banish the craving for tobacco as thousands have with Tobacco Redeemer. Write for free booklet telling of injurious effect of tobacco and of a treatment which has relieved many men.
In Business Since 1909
300,000 Satisfied Customers
THE NEWELL COMPANY
293 Clayton Sta., St. Louis 5, Mo.
FREE BOOK

WANT TO BE A MERCHANT SEAMAN?
$195 APPROX. AV. MONTHLY OR MORE PLUS FOOD OVERTIME LODGING
STARTING PAY
TRAVEL-ADVENTURE CAREER AT SEA ON AMERICAN SHIPS
NO EXPERIENCE REQUIRED TO START
EX-SERVICEMEN WITH SUFFICIENT SERVICE MAY QUALIFY FOR SHIP'S OFFICERS
for further information WRITE today to:
MERCANTILE INFORMATION BUREAU OF GALVESTON
Box 6954-D, Walbrook Station Baltimore 16, Md.

TOOTHACHE?
Quick relief with Dent's. Use Dent's Tooth Gum or Dent's Tooth Drops for cavity toothaches. Use Dent's Dental Poultice for pain or soreness in gums or teeth. At all drug stores.
"Since 1888"
DENT'S TOOTH GUM TOOTH DROPS DENTAL POULTICE

ILLUSTRATED COMIC BOOKLETS
THE KIND MEN LIKE!
(VEST POCKET SIZE)
They are loaded with rare cartoons. Full of Fun and Humor! 20 DIFFERENT booklets sent prepaid for $1 in plain sealed wrapper. No C. O. D.'s.
GRAYKO, Dept. 1956 Box 520, G.P.O., N.Y.C. 1

NEW
COMIC Booklets
A fresh, new line of comic booklets for adults. Rich in lusty humor, with good, clear illustrations. 12 of these little booklets, all different, sent to you prepaid for $1. No COD please.
NOVEL ARTS,
P.O. BOX 410, DANVILLE, ILL.

Illustrated Comic Booklets
Sell our ILLUSTRATED COMIC BOOKLETS and other NOVELTIES. Each booklet size 4½x2¾. We will send 25 assorted booklets prepaid upon receipt of $1.00 or 75 assorted booklets sent prepaid upon receipt of $2.00. Wholesale novelty price list sent with order only. No orders sent C. O. D. Send Cash or Money-order.
REPSAC SALES CO.
1 Orchard St. Dept. K-73 New York 2, N. Y.

BOOKLETS
The kind grown ups like. Each one of these booklets is POCKET SIZE, also contains 8 ILLUSTRATIONS, and is full of fun and entertainment. 12 of these joke booklets, ALL DIFFERENT, shipped prepaid upon receipt of $1.00, or 24 BOOKLETS ALL DIFFERENT shipped prepaid for $2. cash or money order. No orders sent C. O. D. Print name and address and mail to:
TREASURE NOVELTY CO., Dept. 72K
2 ALLEN ST., NEW YORK 2, N. Y.

them horses. And case you got any ideas about it, this gun's got a set trigger, and all the slack's out of it now. Now is he my Injun or is he cold pork?"

Lije Bangor and Two Shooter stared at the bearded train captain for a long second. Then he said softly, "You're a tomfool idjut, Halfhill. There'll be scalps in the Sioux lodges 'cause of you. I hope yours keeps 'em company." Then he was gone, silent as a shadow.

Halfhill gave a snort, and stepped behind Coyote. The pressure of the gun muzzle left his ribs, and even as Coyote bunched his muscles, the dim outline of the wagon exploded into a blurry pinwheel of light as the rifle stock crashed against the back of his head.

THE LIGHT of the fire dazzled his eyes. His stomach was heavy and sickish, and his head throbbed with a dull splitting pain to every beat of his heart. He tried to move, and came fully awake. He was bound to a wagon wheel, spread-eagled against the spokes, the hub of the wheel between his thighs, ankles lashed to separate spokes so that he could not straighten his legs or his back.

The white wagoners around the fire spoke in angry voices. Halfhill, the wagon captain, and his captor, stood with his feet wide apart, a big man, black-bearded, with a heavy, confident voice, which he was using to shout down opposition.

Coyote could understand most of it. ". . . thirty-five of us, countin' the boys. We can all shoot. And we got a prisoner. They ain't goin' to bother us if they see that young buck with a rifle at his head. Only way to show them red devils what's what. And I aim to git my horses back if it's the last thing I do."

Two Shooter said laconically, "An' it prob'ly will be, Halfhill. Can't you git it through your head? These Sioux is fightin' men, and it's every man for himself. They follow a chief only as long as he suits them. And as for this young buck you got prisoner, they figger he's got to take his chances with the rest. Only if you rub him out, his family will take it personal, and it'll be a family matter then. I know old Many Coups. He'll give you no rest till you're acrosst the Snake."

"Aw g'wan with such talk. That un's not even his own. That's the white Injun."

Two Shooter spat. "He's white, all right. Knowed him from a tad. Crows killed his folks, and captured him. Many Coups was a young Dog Soldier then, and he was leadin' a raidin' party of Sioux agin the Crows, and he kilt the one that had the kid. Hadn't no sons of his own so he adopted the kid. About four years old then, I'd say. But don't fool yourself that this kid ain't his own son. He is, and more than that, he's the only son. Old Many Coups will wade through fire to his knees to hang the scalp of the one that kills him."

"And we'll make a mighty sick Injun out of him."

"And while you're makin' a sick Injun out of him, they's goin' to be half a hundred other young bucks workin' on the wagons. And mind you, they play rough when they're blooded a little."

There was no concealing the sneering note in Halfhill's voice as he roared back, "You're the guide, ain't you? I've given you help to scout the lay of the land. On land as flat as this you can give us plenty warnin' to corral for a fight. Great Heaven, man, we're payin' you two hundred dollars for a summer's work! You got your pay 'cause you was supposed to be an old hand with the Injuns! Looks like we could have saved the money, seein' you get your tail up the first bunch of redskins we see!"

The guide reared up across the fire. "You want me to pull out, Halfhill?" His voice was dangerously soft.

"You're paid, and you'll stick," retorted Halfhill truculently. "But you'll get no recommend off of me when we get to Oregon."

"If you git to Oregon," said the guide quietly. He stalked out of the circle of firelight.

Coyote tried to ease his stiffened body. His head pounded with a dull insistent pain. But the lashings were tight, and he could not ease the cramp that was biting his crouched legs.

He thought he heard a soft whisper of sound behind him, and then decided it was his imagination. But then he felt a sudden touch on the bonds of his legs, and the prickle of renewed circulation. He stif-

fened, but did not change his position. Suddenly, one wrist was free, and he had to hook his fingers on the spoke to which it had been bound to keep the numbed arm from falling to his side. Then the other wrist, and he was free; still standing crouched against the wheel, but free.

Cautiously, he waited, peering from under his brows, moving nothing but his eyes until he was sure none of the wagoners around the fire were watching. As blood flowed into his hands with new strength, he took a deep breath, slid down and melted back into the darkness under the wagon.

His puzzled mind asked who and why, and it took a little time for the answer to come. Two Shooter—no. He had left the fire and gone clear on across the circle of wagons. It must have been the girl for a certainty. It must have been her. A warm glow came in his breast. Here, now, was a fit woman for a man!

He was weaponless. They had taken his short, heavy buffalo bow and his arrows. Even his knife. He thought of the old flintlock musket out where he had hobbled his horse, then decided against it. Too far, and one trip would be risky enough, with the patrollers out.

HE CIRCLED the wagons, heading for the one where Mah-get slept. He found it, climbed silently up on the sloping tongue, listened carefully at the puckered opening. Two people slept here, he could hear them breathing, and knew by the rhythm that one was only feigning sleep. He slid through the opening like an eel, found the girl in the dark, and put his hand gently on her shoulder. She screamed.

He started back, made a hissing sound to quiet her. Again she screamed and he put his hand again to her.

"No 'fraid," he whispered urgently, "no 'fraid."

Her clawed fingers lashed at his face in the dark. It was not all fright that distorted her voice. Anger was there too, and he caught the sense of her words.

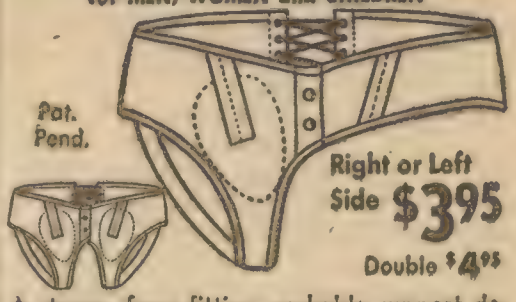
"Get your filthy hands off me. Dirty savage . . . Get away from me!"

The sounds of the aroused camp came through the canvas of the wagon cover.

Immediate Comfort And Relief for You with

RUPTURE-EASER

(A PIPER BRACE PRODUCT)
for MEN, WOMEN and CHILDREN



A strong, form fitting washable support designed to give you relief and comfort. Adjustable back-lacing and adjustable leg straps. Snaps up in front. Soft flat groin pad—**NO STEEL OR LEATHER BANDS.** Unexcelled for comfort, **INVISIBLE UNDER LIGHT CLOTHING.** Washable. Also used as after operation support.

- **THE MOST EFFECTIVE HERNIA SUPPORT.** Thousands of people who have tried old-fashioned, expensive devices turn to Rupture-Easer for new comfort.
- **RUPTURE-EASER IS SANITARY.** Can be washed without harm to fabric — you never offend when you wear Rupture-Easer.
- **NO FITTING REQUIRED.** Just measure around the lowest part of the abdomen and specify right or left side or double.

What Satisfied Users Say —

R. C. of Corvallis, Oregon, Air Mails: *"Send me another Ruture-Easer so I will have one to change off with. It is enabling me to work at top speed at my press machine 8 hours a day."*

M. S. of Anderson, Ind., thanks us and says: *"It is one of the finest things I have ever worn and has made my life worth living. It has given me untold ease and comfort."*

O. B. R. of Boston: *"Send me another . . . I wish to say to everyone who suffers as I did, 'Oh what relief I have found from its help!'"*

Blessed Relief Day and Night

You can sleep in it—you can work in it—you can bathe in it.

10-DAY TRIAL OFFER

Money Back guarantee if you don't get blessed relief!

Piper Brace Company, Dept. FHW-50
308 E. 12th St., Kansas City 6, Mo.
Please send my RUPTURE-EASER by return mail.

Right Side	☐ $3.95	Measure around lowest part of
Left Side	☐ $3.95	my abdomen
Double	☐ $4.95	is _____ INCHES.

We Prepay Postage Except on C.O.D.'s.
Enclosed is: ☐ Money Order ☐ Check for $_____
☐ Send C.O.D.

Name_____

Address_____

City and State_____

RUSH THIS COUPON NOW!

The other woman came grunting out of sleep and added her own shrill voice to the clamor, and Coyote's heart was suddenly cold in his breast.

He cursed this false woman with one blistering sibilant word of Sioux, and eeled out of the wagon. He'd dropped off the tongue, slid back into the dark, and then saw Halfhill come pounding up, his rifle thrust eagerly ahead.

Coyote ducked, scrambled under the wagon, and then as Halfhill ran past, leaped onto the big man's back. One wiry forearm clamped off the sound that rose in Halfhill's bearded throat, and then Coyote hacked at the side of the man's neck with the stiffened edge of his other hand.

The rabbit punch was effective. Halfhill dropped without a sound. Coyote snatched up the gun, a fine cap-lock, took the shot-and-powder pouch, and scrambled again under the wagon, and outside the circle as runners came up with lanterns.

But he had one more thing to do. He snatched a loose coil of rope from another wagon, and circled, clear to the other side of the wagons. And, as he had half-way expected, ran into Two Shooter. The wily scout was nobody's fool. But with the speed of youth, Coyote got his gun lined as quickly as the buckskin scout's. And as each looked into the other's gun muzzle, it was a stalemate. Neither wanted to shoot.

Two Shooter said drily, "My friend, the son of Many Coups had better go. The day is coming, and the wagon men will find him. Besides, you cannot drive out the horses until the circle is broken."

"I can ride one out," retorted Coyote.

"I believe you would, you nervy little bugger," said Two Shooter in Boston talk. Then in Sioux, "Take one horse then. Tell my friend, your father, that he must not make war on this train, for I have saved your life." He chuckled suddenly. "And marry that girl," he said. "You'll never find a better one." Then he was gone before Coyote could puzzle out his words.

Coyote caught a horse expertly, a fine bay, and swung onto its bare back. It snorted, wanted to dance, but he gave a sudden piercing yell into its ear, and it charged at a gap in the wagons, leaped the chained-up tongue, and carried him into the night. He drove the animal hard, until the sound and sight of the circle of wagons was behind him. Then he circled back to where he had left his own horse and the flintlock.

He found it, but there was another pony there, and a dark shape that swung the short barrel of the flintlock on him as he rode up, then lowered it almost as quickly.

It took a second for it to soak in. Then he gasped.

"Antelope Woman!"

She bowed her head modestly, and would not look at him. He suddenly heard the words of Two Shooter! Marry the girl. You'll never find a better one.

"You," he said slowly. "You are the one who cut me free in the wagon camp."

Her soft liquid eyes met his and fell again.

"Yes," she said in a small voice.

"You followed me."

"Yes," again in the small voice. "But Two Shooter caught me. He gave me his knife, and let me go, and I came around the camp and found you and cut the ropes."

"Huh!" said Coyote. He almost smiled. Then he said sternly, "It it not a woman's place in war. Get on your horse."

She bowed her head submissively, and mounted her pony. Coyote rode ahead, as a man should, leading the captured horse, and his feelings were mixed with elation and gloom. Elation at what Antelope Woman had done for him, and gloom at what the Dog Soldiers would do to the wagon train. Despite the falseness of the woman Mah-get, he shuddered at the thought of her scalp on a Dog Soldier's lance.

The land was gullied here, where the waters of the creek had changed their run a hundred times in thousands of years of wandering, and he kept automatically to the low ground, keeping his silhouette from the faint lightness of the skyline. Then the thought came to him, and he pulled up abruptly.

"Wait here," he said to Antelope Woman. "Gather a bundle of dry grass, as big as you can and wait. I will come back."

He retraced his meandering course, still threading the linked gullies, until he was once more almost abreast the wagon circle.

He gathered grass, bundled it tightly, and then climbed the rise of the gully and lay flat, with no more than his eyes showing over the crest of the rise.

The stars paled. From behind him came the scratchy sound of the bugle calling the wagons awake. Then, out of the blinding eye of the rising sun, the Dog Soldiers came.

COYOTE SAW, because he knew what to look for, and where. A faint wisp of dust, almost invisible against the sun, still several miles out, for they would want the sun full at their backs, to blind the eyes of the wagon men, when they made their rush. Coyote slid carefully down into the gully.

He tied the bundle of tinder-dry grass to the end of the long rope he had taken from the wagons. He put the muzzle of his captured rifle against the bundle, loaded with a loose thimble-full of powder and no ball. The explosion made a little hand-clap of noise, no more, but the powder flared out and touched off the grass. And then Coyote swung up and rode, kicking his horse into a gallop, with the bundle of flame bounding at the end of the rope. Behind him the prairie grass caught—slowly at first, and then eagerly—licking out pale little tongues to catch other blades, then with a rising flare as its own heat created draft to drive it.

He pulled up where Antelope Woman waited, paused only long enough to tie on the bundle of inflammables she had collected, and then rode on, sending her ahead with the captured horse. Then, when the bundle of grass was burned, and the rope end itself had charred into flame, he pulled up, and again wriggled to the crest of the gully bank.

Smoke boiled up back there, miles of it, following the crooked line of the gullies. He lay, panting hard with exertion of his heedless ride, and then saw another bloom of smoke set in, at the far end of his own line. Two Shooter had caught on. He was completing the arc of fire, and he had been in time. The flurry of dust that was the Dog Soldiers was pulling up, unable to make their ponies brave the rolling cloud of dirty cotton smoke, the breast-high tongues of flame. And the wind was carrying it on at a pace no pony could

DICE • CARDS
Perfect Dice, Magic Dice, Magic Cards—READ THE BACKS—Inks, Daubs, Poker Chips, Gaming Layouts, Dice Boxes, Counter Games, Punchboards. WRITE FOR CATALOG TODAY.
K. C. CARD CO., 815 S. Wabash Ave., Chicago, Ill.

STOP CIGARETTES
the better, drugless way. Regain vitality. Feel younger. Be longer winded. Enjoy life. Save money. Help steady your nerves. Send $1.00 now for simple successful plan. Delay is very costly. Act now.
MONEYBACK GUARANTEE.
HEALTH EXTENSION PLAN • Drawer 1672R, Marysville, California

Have Fun! Be a Magician!
CHANGE NICKELS into DIMES!
Place MAGIC CAP over 4 nickels . . . Presto! nickels vanish and 4 dimes appear! Cap may be examined. No skill required! Precision-made device. ONLY $1.00 POSTPAID. Remit money order or cash. Satisfaction Guaranteed.
FREE with your order! LARGE CATALOG of 500 mystifying tricks & jokes. Write today!
D. Robbins & Co., Dept. D-57, 131 W. 42 St., New York 18, N. Y.

BOYS-IT'S FREE!
"THE WONDERS OF CHEMISTRY"
This exciting new book shows how to amaze your friends with chemical magic, describes many fascinating home experiments, tells of fun, thrills and big future opportunities for boys who know chemistry. Special atomic energy feature. Send today!
THE PORTER CHEMICAL COMPANY
859 Prospect Avenue Hagerstown, Maryland

. . . the dope on 1950 football!
Prospects of your favorite team? Which are the star players? How's the competition?
You'll find all the answers in the *big red magazine*. Up-to-the-second dope on the nation's liveliest elevens. Hundreds of pictures of players and teams in action. Everything you want to know about '50 football you'll find in
Illustrated
FOOTBALL ANNUAL
If your local newsdealer can't supply you send 30¢ and we'll rush you a copy postpaid. Address Fiction House, Inc., 130 West 42nd St., New York City 18.

match.

Coyote slid down, and walked back to where Antelope Woman waited with the horses.

They rode ahead, half a mile, sent the horses charging through the smoke and feeble flames where the fire was creeping outward, and took a long swing that would fetch them home. The fire would hang on for days, probably. And it would grow. By the time it died down, the wagons would be gone, and thoughts of war would be dimmer.

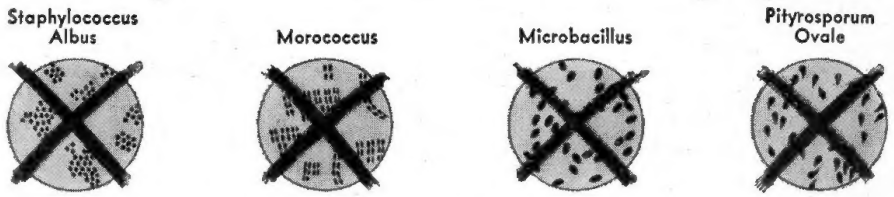
So Coyote rode home. He drove the captured horse ahead, spotted and streaked with paint to show its status. Antelope Woman rode a proper pace behind. When he turned to look at her, she smiled demurely and looked shyly down.

Coyote felt warm inside. He would give the captured horse to Antelope Woman's father, to show how rich he was. He would dance a coup dance, for he had struck down an armed enemy, and in his own camp, and had the enemy's rifle to prove it. And he would ask his father to give him a new name, after he had his first-coup feather.

Coyote Man, he thought, would be a good name.

RESEARCH EXPERT SAYS:

AMAZING NEW SCIENTIFIC FORMULA (Contains no Alcohol) destroys these hair-killing germs:



NOTHING CAN DO MORE TO

SAVE YOUR HAIR

Look for these symptoms. ITCHY SCALP, DANDRUFF, UNPLEASANT HEAD ODORS, HEAD SCALES, *HAIR LOSS!* It may be nature's warning of approaching baldness. Be guided by NATURE'S WARNING! Do as thousands do: start using the NEW AND IMPROVED, AMAZING, SCIENTIFIC HAIR RESEARCH FORMULA (it contains no alcohol).

NEW FORMULA GIVES BETTER RESULTS

It kills quickly and efficiently millions of trouble-breeding bacteria. This new and improved HAIR RESEARCH FORMULA now KILLS *safely* and quickly ALL FOUR types of these destructive hair germs. Many medical authorities know that these hair-destroying germs are a significant cause of baldness. Do what science knows nothing better for you to do: KILL THESE GERMS, they may DESTROY your HAIR GROWTH. Act now, mail coupon below and test it at home for 10 days FREE at our expense. NO OTHER FORMULA known to science can do more to *SAVE YOUR HAIR!*

GET FIVE IMMEDIATE BENEFITS

(1) KILL the four types of germs that may be retarding your normal hair growth.

(2) HELP stop scalp itch and burn.

(3) FOLLOW the instructions of the treatment and start enjoying healthful massage action.

(4) HELPS bring HAIR-NOURISHING blood to scalp.

(5) HELPS remove ugly loose DANDRUFF.

Don't wait till you get BALD! It's *too late* then. Remember, science knows no cure for baldness. The NEW AND IMPROVED HAIR RESEARCH FORMULA that contains no alcohol, helps keep your scalp (that may be sick) free of loose dandruff, seborrhea, and helps stop the hair loss they cause. With this formula your hair will *appear* thicker, more alive and attractive almost from the first time you use it.

HAIR RESEARCH CO., Dept. 69
1025 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey

SATISFIED USERS SAY

"Nothing I have ever used has done more for my hair"—*A. P., Trenton, N. J.*

"My friends remark how much better my hair looks after using your formula for only two weeks"—*A. L., Boston, Mass.*

"No Hair Expert I have ever gone to has done as much for me"—*H. H., Chicago, Ill.*

"I was skeptical at first but took a chance, now after ten days' trial I am convinced. Nothing has ever helped me more than your treatment"—*J. S., Los Angeles, Calif.*

MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE WITH A 10-DAY FREE TRIAL

If the NEW AND IMPROVED AMAZING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH FORMULA doesn't live up to your expectations, if you don't feel it's the best thing you ever did for your hair, if your hair and scalp don't appear improved, if you are not 100% delighted with it, if after using it 10 days you don't see an improvement, return the unused portion and your money will be refunded in full. You have nothing to lose, you are the sole judge. SO DON'T DELAY, MAIL COUPON TODAY!

SENT ON APPROVAL!

HAIR RESEARCH CO., Dept. 69
1025 Broad Street, Newark, New Jersey

Rush one month's supply of your NEW AND IMPROVED AMAZING SCIENTIFIC HAIR RESEARCH FORMULA at once. I enclose $2.00 cash, check or money order, ship prepaid. My money will be refunded if not satisfied.

Name.....

Address.....

City..... State.....

☐ I enclose $5. Send three months' supply.
I understand if not delighted with the NEW AND IMPROVED HAIR FORMULA, I can return it after 10 days for full purchase price refund.

BE A SUCCESS AS A RADIO-TELEVISION TECHNICIAN

TWO FREE BOOKS SHOW HOW MAIL COUPON

America's Fast Growing Industry Offers You All Three

I TRAINED THESE MEN AT HOME

OWNS SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS
"Today I am considered an expert Radio-Television Technician. I have four employees working in my shop. Repair business has doubled."—PAUL MILLER, Toledo, Ohio.

RADIO ENGINEER ABC NETWORK
"4 years ago, I was a bookkeeper with a hand-to-mouth salary. Now I am a Radio Engineer with key station of the ABC network."—NORMAN H. WARD, Ridgefield Park, New Jersey.

$5 TO $10 WEEK IN SPARE TIME
"While learning, made $5 to $10 a week in spare time. Now have a spare time shop in my home and earn as high as $25 a week."—LEANDER ARNOLD, Pontiac, Michigan.

SERVICING BUSINESS PROFITABLE
"For the past two years, I have been operating my own Servicing business. Net profit, $6,850. N.R.I. training made it possible."—PHILIP G. BROGAN, Louisville, Kentucky.

GETS FIRST JOB THROUGH N.R.I.
"My first job, with KDLR, was obtained for me by your Graduate Service Dept. Am now Chief Engineer, Police Radio Station WQOX."—T. S. NORTON, Hamilton, Ohio.

SEES PROFIT IN RADIO-TELEVISION
"I am operating my own Radio Sales and Service business. With FM and Television, we are looking forward to a very profitable future."—ALBERT PATRICK, Tampa, Florida.

SPARE TIME SERVICE PAYS WELL
"Work only in spare time at Radio and average about $40 a month. Knew nothing about Radio before enrolling with N.R.I."—SAMUEL T. DEWALD, St. Clair, Pennsylvania.

1. EXTRA MONEY IN SPARE TIME

As part of my servicing course, I send you SPECIAL BOOKLETS starting the day you enroll that show how you can make $5, $10 or more a week EXTRA fixing neighbors' Radios in spare time while learning. Tester you build with parts I send helps.

2. GOOD PAY JOB

Your next step is a good job installing and servicing Radio-Television sets, or becoming boss of your own Radio-Television Sales and Service Shop, or getting a good job in a Broadcasting Station. In 1945, there were 943 Radio Stations. Today, about 2,700 are on the air! Result—thousands of qualified men stepped into good jobs. Then add developments in FM, Two-Way Radio, Police, Aviation, Marine, Micro-wave Relay Radio. Think what this means! New jobs, more jobs, good pay for qualified men.

3. BRIGHT FUTURE

And think of the opportunities in Television. Only 19 Stations were on the air in 1947. Today, more than fifty. And the experts say there will be over 1,000 within three years. Manufacturers are producing over 100,000 Television sets a month. Be a successful Radio-Television Operator or Technician . . . get in line for success and a bright future in America's fastest-growing industry!

I Will Train You at Home

You Practice Servicing or Communications with MANY KITS

I've trained hundreds of men with no previous experience to be successful TECHNICIANS. I will train you, too. Or now you can enroll for my NEW practical course in Radio-Television Communications. Train for your FCC operator's or technician's license. You learn Radio-Television theory from clear, illustrated lessons in my tested home study courses.

As part of both my Servicing and Communications course, I send you MANY KITS of modern equipment that "bring to life" theory you learn. Building circuits, conducting experiments with them, introducing and repairing defects, gives you valuable, practical experience. (Some of the equipment you get is shown below.) Everything I send is yours to keep.

Mail Coupon for Books FREE

Coupon entitles you to ACTUAL LESSON on Radio Servicing with many pictures and diagrams plus my 64-page book, "HOW TO BE A SUCCESS IN RADIO-TELEVISION" both FREE. See what my graduates are doing and earning. Send coupon today. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. OFG, National Radio Institute, Pioneer Home Study Radio School, Washington 9, D. C.

You Build This MODERN RADIO
As part of my Servicing course, I send you speaker, tubes, chassis, loop antenna, transformer, EVERYTHING you need to build this modern Radio. Use it to conduct many valuable tests and practice servicing. It's yours to keep.

You Build This TRANSMITTER
As part of my New Communications course, I send parts to build this low-power broadcasting Transmitter that shows how to put a station "on the air." Perform procedures demanded of Broadcast Station operators, conduct many tests, experiments. It's yours to keep.

VETERANS
GET THIS TRAINING WITHOUT COST UNDER G. I. BILL. MAIL COUPON NOW.

Good for Both—FREE

MR. J. E. SMITH, President, Dept. OFG
National Radio Institute, Washington 9, D. C.

Mail me Sample Lesson and 64-page Book about How to Win Success in Radio-Television—both FREE. (No salesman will call. Please write plainly.)

Name..... Age.....

Address.....

City..... Zone..... State.....

☐ Check if Veteran ☐ Approved Under G. I. Bill